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THE CROCK OF GOLD

TWELVE FAIRY TALES,
OLD AND NEW, AS TOLD
BY JEREMIAH TOOPE,
SCHOOLMASTER

THE CROCK OF GOLD

S. BARING-GOULD

METHUEN
36 ESSEX ST STRAND

F.D.B

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THE CROCK OF GOLD

JEREMIAH TOOPE was schoolmaster at Ashburton, a small town (not small in its own opinion) in the county of Devon.

The Grammar School occupies an ancient building, once a chapel dedicated to S. James, with a belfry, which, however, no longer contains a peal of bells.

Jeremiah was under a body of trustees, which sat occasionally, and generally sat upon him. Jeremiah was a scholar, and a scholar of no ordinary attainments. Scholarship was not a distinguishing feature of the body of trustees; that is to say, what the trustees did not know, that they decided was not knowledge. Mr. Toope was unfortunate in several respects. He was short-sighted, he was hard of hearing, he had one leg stiff, and his back was bent; his hair was grey, he was plain, had a stammer, and had lost some teeth. From early childhood he had grown up a weakly, deformed being, unable to take part in the sports of his fellow-scholars, and when a young man, cut off by his infirmities from sharing with them in shooting, riding, and hunting; and nothing was left to him but

books, and in books he forgot the troubles of the world, and the disdain with which he was regarded. Whether he ever from a distance loved a beautiful girl cannot be told, but if he did, it must have been with a consciousness that his passion was hopeless, as no girl was likely to look favourably upon so poor a creature as Jeremiah Toope.

But his life was not an unhappy one. He lived in a world of dreams, and these dreams of rare beauty and marvellous adventure. He had taken a fancy from an early age to the very old English storytellers, the romancers who told of King Arthur and the fair Gwenivere, of Sir Launcelot du Lac, of Merlin and Vivienne, and of a hundred other heroes of prowess and ladies of beauty.

In thinking over the achievements of the knights of old, he forgot the sordidness of modern days, especially the humiliations to which he was subjected by a body of trustees; and in bringing up before the eye of his fancy the splendid beauties of King Arthur's court, he forgot the humbler damsels of his native town, who flouted him because he was not a man of attractive exterior.

Now it was so that one day the trustees met in conclave, and they called up Jeremiah Toope before them.

Then the Mayor, who was chairman, said:—"Mr. Toope, me and my brother trustees thinks as how we must dispense with your services; because, sir, being

so short-sighted, you don't see the little games the boys is up to under your very nose."

Then said a second trustee:—"Yes, Mr. Toope, I says the same. You are so deaf that you can't hear whether them boys say their lessons right or wrong."

"And," said a third trustee, "I says, go you must, for and because you ain't nimble on your feet; and when a boy has been naughty, and deserves a whacking, you stump after him, and he cuts away and you don't catch him."

"Moreover," said a fourth trustee, "my wife says you're too frivolous to exercise moral influence over the boys, with your romance and ballad reading."

"Then again," observed a fifth trustee, "my verdict is, go you shall, because you're too serious, and can't enter into the sports of your scholars and share in their hilarity."

"Yes, indeed," concluded the sixth trustee, "I pronounce for your dismissal, for reasons I shall not trouble you to hear"—the reasons being that he had three unmarried daughters, and he trusted that a new head-master might chance to fancy one of them.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Toope humbly, "I am your servant. I accept my *congé*. You will allow me to keep my books in the house till I have found a new situation?"

So Mr. Jeremiah Toope was cast adrift.

Now he heard that there was a grammar school at Tavistock, between which place and Ashburton the

whole extensive tract of Dartmoor intervened. He moreover learned that there was at the time a prospect of vacancy in the mastership there.

So one day he made up a little bundle and started to walk over Dartmoor, to go to Tavistock, and solicit the vacant situation. It was a long and an arduous walk, over heath, and rock, and bog, for he did not take the highway, but a short cut; and when evening arrived he had lost his way and was faint and weary, and saw no tokens anywhere of a house.

Happily the season was summer, and the weather was fine.

Mr. Toope stumbled along with his stiff leg, and peered about with his dull eyes, and was quite at a loss in which direction to go, and quite incapable of going very much further.

The sun had set, and darkness was coming on.

Then he came on a circle of standing granite stones, surrounding a slight mound made up of small pieces of stone, covered over with a thick quilt of moss.

The spot was at all events dry, and Jeremiah lay down on the grey, soft moss, and, before he knew it, was asleep.

Hardly had his eyes closed before it was to him as though he saw a great deal plainer, and a great deal more than he had seen when his eyes were open.

He saw the upright stones as before, and the outline of the distant hills; but he saw that a crowd of

little people stood round the circle, and that within was one who wore a gold crown, and that he had his arms about and was endeavouring to console a little woman, also crowned, who seemed heart-broken and was weeping bitterly.

All those around stood silent, looking on in great distress. Clearly they were pixies. Then the king turned to Jeremiah, and said: "A great tragedy has taken place. A fox has worried and killed Her Majesty's pet hedgehog. When the fox came up, the hedgehog discreetly coiled himself up into a ball; but the fox was cunning, and he whacked at the ball with his tail till he set it a-rolling, and rolled it down into the water, where the hedgehog uncoiled, and at once the fox was on him and ate him—I mean all his tender, fleshy parts—and left nothing but the prickles behind."

Then the queen burst into a storm of tears, and the king laboured with best intent and efforts to comfort her, but ineffectually.

"You see," pursued the king, "to what a condition of despair my beloved wife and queen has been brought by the terrible disaster. She swears she will never smile again, and I seriously believe this trouble will undermine her health and leave her a wreck, unless she can be got to forget her troubles. It is due to Puck, my confidential servant, that you have been misled and brought to this spot. I am well aware who you are and what are your attainments.

I ask you, will you endeavour to dissipate Her Majesty's grief by telling her stories, which shall engage her interest, take up her attention, and divert her mind from the hedgehog?"

"Nothing, nothing can do that," sobbed the queen.

"My dear," said the king soothingly, "let him but try."

"I will do my best," answered Jeremiah; "but I can tell only a number of old-fashioned tales, and tell them in my own way."

"That will exactly suit us," said the king. "We are ourselves old-fashioned and nearly out of date, so that such antiquated tales as you may relate will be very real to us, and I trust interesting to my wife. You shall not go unrewarded."

"I thank your Majesty," said Mr. Toope; "it is not for reward I tell them, but to be of service to you—and, candidly be it spoken, to please myself, as I love these old tales."

"Very well," said the king; "but for all that, rewarded you shall be. Understand that beneath this mound lies buried a mighty chief, and he was laid there with a golden crock or cup in his hand. That crock shall be yours. I will raise it and give it you, should you succeed in drying my wife's tears, restoring her spirits, and bringing the smile back to her lips."

"I will do my best," said Jeremiah. "Shall I tell you a cheerful or a sorrowful tale?"

Then the queen said, "One that is sad."

But at the same moment the king said, "One that is cheerful."

"Nay," said Mr. Jeremiah, "I cannot please both at once, so I will even tell you a story that is neither wholly sad nor wholly joyous; and if it does not entirely satisfy one or the other, it will be satisfactory to me to know that it will offend neither."

"I am content," said the king.

Then the queen lifted up her face a little, and turned it, leaning her chin upon her hand, and looked at the schoolmaster, who cleared his throat and began the story of the Princess Rosalind. And all the pixies stood round silent, and listening with great attention.

I.

PRINCESS ROSALIND

THERE was in England a princess. Her name was Rosalind. And because she was a princess, and because she had such a charming name, and because her glass told her she was beautiful, and because she believed herself to be rich, therefore she was lifted up in her conceit, and esteemed none of those suitors who came to ask for her hand worthy to receive it. She would marry no one but a king, she said, and she sent away all who came, because they were only dukes, or marquesses, or even so low down in the scale as earls.

It was in vain for the king, her father, to say that kings were scarce. There had been wars, which had swept away some; there had been revolutions, which had suppressed others. Some were old, some were mere infants, most were already married, consequently there was absolutely no choice. Rosalind must marry a nobleman or remain unwed. But she remained stubborn, and declared she would rather die an old maid than demean herself to become the wife of a duke or a marquess.

PRINCESS ROSALIND

Now it fell out that one night, when the moon shone bright, she heard a horn winding among the hills. Then she looked from her window, for she wondered greatly, as it was not a time when hunters would be abroad.

And presently she saw a knight on a white horse come riding up. He had black armour on him, and about his helmet a crown, and every point in the crown (that was of silver) ended in a skull; and out of the eye-holes of each skull gleamed carbuncles. He rode under the tower where was the princess, and there he drew from his back a shin-bone strung with golden woman's hair, and on this he played, and as he played, he sang a song so sad and so beautiful as almost to make her swoon away.

Now after he had played awhile he ceased, and called "Rosalind!"

And she answered, "I am here. Who art thou?"

Then he answered, "I am Grim, King of the Ghosts, and I have come from Deadland to seek thee."

And when he had said this he struck spurs into his white horse and rode away, and when he was among the hills then he winded his horn again, so sadly that the heart of the princess melted away, and she sank on the floor of her room.

All next day she was silent. She could not eat; she could only think of the night visitor, and she wondered greatly whether he would come again.

Well, it was so. Next night, when the moon shone, then again she heard the horn among the hills, and presently she saw the white horse and the gleaming silver crown, and the carbuncle eyes looking out of dead men's heads.

When the King of the Ghosts arrived under the castle wall, he again took the shank-bone strung with golden hair and played on it so sad and so sweet a melody, and withal sang thereto, that Rosalind fell a-weeping.

There hung a parrot in a cage at her window. Then the parrot began to talk, and said :—

"Beware, beware, my pretty lady,
And shut the window fast,
And close each ear, nor seek to hear,
Until this knight be passed."

But the princess was angry, and she said :—

"Now hold thy tongue, thou silly parrot,
Thy words they are but vain,
It is a king that doth ride and sing
As he courses o'er the plain."

Then the King of the Ghosts rode on without a word, for he was angered at the talk of the parrot.

Now during the day that followed, the princess sat at her window thinking of the strange visitor.

Then the parrot began to talk, and it said :—

"Seal up with wax each pretty eye,
Run wax into each ear;
Better for thee all blind to be,
And neither to see nor hear.'

Then the princess was angry, and she threw something over the cage to make the bird suppose it was night, and so keep silence.

Again at night she heard the horn winding, and again as before the knight rode under her tower, and played and sang. And this is what he sang :—

"Go fetch me some of your father's gold,
And some of your mother's fee;
To a land we'll go where falleth no snow,
Where thou shalt be my lady."

Then the princess found all power of resistance gone from her. She rose up.

She fetchéd some of her father's gold,
And some of her mother's fee;
And she went afore to the stable door,
Where stood her white palfrey.

She mounted with speed on her milk-white steed,
And he on his iron-grey,
And away they did ride to a clear waterside,
Six hours before the day.

When that before her the princess saw a waste of water with the moon setting over it, and heard the water lapping sadly against the bank, and the wind moaning among the reeds,

Then the knight said :—

"Unlight, unlight, my lady bright,
Unlight, unlight, I say;
Six pretty maids have I drownéd here,
Thou shalt be seventh to-day.

"Take off, take off thy robe of silk,
And lay it upon a stone,
Thy gay, gay gown is all too good
To rot in a watery tomb."

Then she took off her robe of silk
And laid it upon a stone,
He put his hand in her pocket,
And drew out a hundred crown.

Now she saw that the King of the Ghosts had brought her there with intent to slay her, for of what profit would she be in his ghostly land of the dead, if she were in living flesh and throbbing blood? A great fear fell on her, and she wished she had attended to the warning of the parrot. She saw that she must save herself as well as might be by her own wit. So she said to Grim, King of the Ghosts:—

"Now never blink, but stoop on the brink,
And pluck the thistles away,
That they may not entangle my curly hair,
Nor my lily-white flesh may fray."

He never did blink, but stooped at the brink,
To pluck the thistles away,
That they might not entangle her curly hair,
Nor her lily-white flesh might fray.

Then he stood up and said:—

"Take off, take off, thy holland smock,
And lay it upon a stone,
Thy holland smock be all too fine
To rot in a watery tomb."

She answered him :—

"If I must pull off my holland smock,
Then turn away from me;
For it ill befits that such as thou
Should see a stark lady."

He considered that what she said was reasonable, and he turned to look at the trees and the bushes. Then softly she stole up behind him.

She gave him a push, and a hearty push,
And the fiend-knight pushéd in,
Saying, "Swim! O swim, thou false fiend-knight,
Thou never the land shalt win."

Saying, "Go! aye, go where falleth no snow,
O go to thine own country;
But I will abide by the clear waterside,
And well am I rid of thee."

He swam to the right, and he swam to the left,
And he said, "Hold out to me
Thy lily-white hand, and draw me to land,
And rewarded thou shalt be."

But she would not help him. There he had slain in like manner six pretty maids, and now she, the seventh, overcame him by her woman's wit.

She mounted with speed her milk-white steed,
And led the iron-grey,
And away did ride to the castle-side,
Three hours before the day.

The parrot he sat in the lady's window,
And the parrot he did say,
"O where have you been, my fair young queen,
So early afore the day?"

"Hush! hush! Speak not, my pretty parrot!
Hush! question not of me,
Then a cage thou shalt have of the glittering gold,
With a door of ivory."

Her father he was not so sound asleep,
But he heard what the parrot did say;
He called, "Oh, what waketh my parrot
So early before the day?"

Then the parrot did not wish to have it known what had been the adventure of his mistress with the King of the Ghosts, so he answered :—

"The cat was up at the high window,
And the cat he would me slay,
So I loud did cry for help to come nigh,
To drive the cat away."

The princess was well pleased at what the bird said, and she entered the tower and ascended to her room, and took the parrot's cage and brought it within. She saw that what she had thrown over it had been lifted by the night wind and cast on the ground. Thus was it that the parrot had waked. And now she said :—

"Well turn'd, well turn'd, my pretty parrot,
A good turn done unto me;
I will give thee a cage of the glittering gold,
With a door of ivory."

One might have been sure that such an adventure as this would have sobered the princess in her self-esteem. But it was not so. Instead of considering

how foolish she had been in running away with the King of the Ghosts, and so nearly finding her death, she was the more puffed up with vanity, for she thought her wit must be vastly great that she should have been able to overreach this fiend. No suitors now had the slightest chance of success with her, for none of those who came were kings.

As for the parrot, the promise made was clean forgotten; indeed the bird was itself neglected to such an extent that one day the cage fell to the ground, broke, and the parrot escaped, without the princess discovering the loss, for an entire week.

Now the parrot was very wrath at the falseness of his young mistress, and sought to be avenged; but as he was of noble nature, although only a parrot, yet he did not seek revenge as out of personal anger only, but because he desired her amendment therewith.

Now when his cage was broken he flew over hill and dale, and he saw a shepherd lad keeping his sheep in a pleasant vale where the grass was almost hidden by the buttercups; and the shepherd was playing on his pipes.

Now as the shepherd boy played he heard the scream of the parrot, and looked up, and saw the strangely coloured bird perched in a tree. He laid aside his pipes, and ran to observe it closer. Never before had he seen such plumage, and, it must be admitted, heard so ugly a voice.

The parrot at once flew to a tree a little further off, and the shepherd boy pursued it. He forgot his sheep, and thought only of the wonderful bird; and so the parrot led him over hill and dale till he came to the king's castle, and there saw walking in her garden the beautiful princess. Then he forgot the parrot, forgot everything, in his admiration for her beauty.

Now when the princess left walking and entered the castle, the shepherd, whose name was Florimund, returned sadly over hill and dale to his sheep. That night he could not sleep; he thought only of the princess.

Now on the following day he was walking with his pipes that he no longer played, and was leading his sheep to their pasture, when he saw a beautiful crimson rose in the hedge. It was more lovely than any rose he had ever seen before; so he plucked it, and when he had done so he heard the same strange voice as he had heard on the preceding day, and he looked up and saw the parrot, and now the parrot spoke, and said:—

> "Come hither, come hither, thou shepherd boy,
> The rose thou shalt give to me,
> And I will it bear to thy lady fair
> As a love-token sent by thee."

Then the parrot flew down from the tree and took the rose in his beak, and away he sped on his green and scarlet wings, nor tarried till he reached the

king's castle, and there he alighted at the window of the princess her chamber.

Now she was sitting there, and she saw her bird, and that he had a beautiful rose in his beak, and she put out her hand and took it.

Then said the parrot:—

"O lady, I 've come from a far, far land,
And the rose to thee I bring,
A token of love thy heart to move
That sendeth an outlandish king."

Thereat the princess was glad, and she said: "It is well made. The leaves are of green silk, and the petals of the most beautiful velvet that ever came from loom."

But as she looked closer, she saw that the rose was not made by the hands of men, but was one that sprang out of the earth and was the creation of God. Then she flamed red with wrath, and she tore the flower to pieces, and cast stalk and petals on the ground, and cried out:—

"This is a sorry gift from a king. It is nought: I took it for a make-believe rose, but it is only a common natural rose; therefore I will none of it."

So when the parrot heard this he flew over hill and dale, till he came where the shepherd was pasturing his sheep, and the parrot perched on a tree and said:—

"Alack and aday! the fair ladie
Will none of thy crimson rose.
It s not a make-believe, saith she,
But such as in garden grows."

Now to while away the time the shepherd had set bird traps, and it fell out that he had caught a beautiful song bird, and he had made of rushes a little cage, and in this he had set the bird he had caught.

Now when the parrot saw this, then he said :—

"Now give to me for the fair ladie,
The throstle thou hast ta'en,
I will engage that in yonder cage
Her heart thou now wilt gain."

So the parrot took the cage in his beak, and flew away over hill and dale till he came to the king's castle. And there was the princess walking in the garden. The parrot flew to her, and placed the cage with the singing bird in it in her hand, and at once the thrush began to pipe and warble.

The parrot said :—

"O lady, I 've come from a far, far land,
And the bird to you I bring,
A token of love thy heart to move,
That sends an outlandish king."

Then the princess was pleased, and she ran and took the cage with the thrush in it to show it to her father and all the court, and she said :—

"This is not a real bird, but it is made with great skill, and it pipes by reason of clockwork inside, and

a pair of bellows moved by the clockwork, and a little organ that is concealed under the feathers."

Then the king, her father, laughed aloud, and said :—

"Silly Rosalind! This is indeed an ordinary thrush such as sings in every bush."

Now when she heard that, she was very angry, and she called the cat and gave the thrush to the cat, and the cat ate it.

So when the parrot saw this he flew over hill and dale till he came where the shepherd was pasturing his sheep, and the parrot perched on a tree and said :—

"Alack and aday! the fair ladie
Will none of thy singing thrush.
It is not a make-believe, saith she,
But such as is in each bush."

Now it was so, that on that day the shepherd had been breaking stones, and as he broke one there fell out a diamond.

When the parrot saw this, then he said :—

"Now give to me, for the fair ladie,
The precious, sparkling stone,
And she will agree to yield to thee
Her heart, and to thee alone."

So the parrot took the real diamond in his beak, and flew with it away over hill and dale, till he came to the king's castle, and there was the princess sitting in the hall. He flew in and dropped the diamond

on the table before her, and perching on a rafter he said :—

"O lady, I've come from a far, far land,
A diamond stone I bring,
A token of love thy heart to move,
That sends an outlandish king."

But the princess threw the stone away with indignation. "I have," said she, "diamonds in abundance. There are five hundred in my necklace, a thousand in my stomacher, and two thousand in my tiara. What does an outlandish king mean by sending me one beggarly diamond? Had he sent me an artificial stone, an imitation diamond, there would have been something in that worth consideration."

So when the parrot saw this he flew over hill and dale, till he came where the shepherd was pasturing his sheep, and the parrot perched on a tree and said:—

"Alack and aday, the fair ladie
Will none of your precious stone;
She hateth the true, but the make-believe
And the false she will have alone."

Now when the shepherd heard this he started to his feet and stamped, and his face grew red with anger. And he cried out, "Hitherto I have but trifled in this matter; but now am I serious, and with thy help, parrot, will I achieve the adventure, and I will go myself and win this wilful and hard-hearted princess."

Then the parrot said, "Command me, and I will do what thou desirest."

Thereupon said the shepherd, "Canst thou fly away to where are rich merchants' shops, and bring me velvet and silk and satin and fine plumes and costly raiment, such as a king should wear?"

Then the parrot answered, "Give me time, and I will bring you piece by piece such raiment as you require."

On a day in summer, when the sun shone bright, the parrot flew over hill and dale followed by one hundred other parrots, all in most gorgeous livery of green and scarlet, and they made so great a noise that on reaching the king's castle everyone came out to see what was the cause.

Among those who came was the princess.

Then her escaped bird sang:—

"There cometh a prince from a far countrie,
With feathers upon his head;
And he would marry the fair princess
Who with none but a king will wed.

"No palace than his was ever seen
So noble—a vaulted blue;
'Tis carpeted through with living green,
And diamonds the pavement strew.

"Ten thousand minstrels are in his choir,
And ever they pipe and play,
And king is he of the gentlest race
That never resist his sway.

"His throne with richest purple dight,
Exhaleth a perfume sweet,
And when he walketh out he treads
Gold pieces beneath his feet.

"The cellar he hath is ever full,
And the wine it sparkles clear,
And a hundred thousand lamps are lit,
His halls in the night to cheer.

"The greatest riches the world can give
He hath, and he hath no care;
And only he lacketh a fair woman
His sceptre and throne to share."

Now when the princess heard this her heart danced for joy. At length had come a proposal from the man for whom she had tarried so long.

And presently from out the wood came a beautiful young man. He had blue eyes and fair hair, and he was richly arrayed; and on his head was a green velvet cap set with white feathers.

He was well received by both king and court.

Then he bent his knee, and asked if he might have the hand of the matchless Princess Rosalind. The king, her father, answered that she was hard to satisfy. None of those who had hitherto offered had been accepted by her; but he must ask her himself.

Then the stranger turned to the princess, and she would not say him nay, and so forthwith they were married, and the festivities were kept up for an entire week. And all this time the parrots flew about the palace, and their gorgeous feathers shone in the

sun; and nothing could have exceeded the beauty, but unhappily they made an overpowering noise, and their voices were unmusical.

Now when the feasting and dancing had lasted a week and a day, then the merry-making ceased. The princess was very happy, and loved her husband with all her heart, and thought herself the most fortunate woman in the world.

But on a day she and he stood in the window, and were talking together. Then she said to him: "I know that you are a king, and that your name is Florimund, but as yet you have told me nothing of your kingdom and of your people."

Then he smiled, and answered, "When did I tell thee I was a king?"

She replied, "The parrot proclaimed it."

"It is well," he answered; "I am a king, for I can rule my own self, and everyone who can govern his own will and passions, he is as true a sovereign as one that weareth a crown."

Then she started, and said, "How is this? What mean you? I heard that you ruled over the gentlest race, and that the subjects under your sceptre never rebelled."

"That is true," said he; "I am a shepherd, and my sheep are my obedient subjects."

"What!" she exclaimed; "and thy palace with a blue vault?"

"That is the wide world, overarched with the sky."

"And carpeted with living green, bestrewed with diamonds?"

"The green grass that twinkles with morning dew."

"And what of the minstrel choir?"

"These be the singing birds."

"And thy throne of purple that exhales fragrance?"

"That," answered the shepherd, "is a bank of violets."

"And when thou walkest thou treadest on gold?"

"It is even so—on buttercups."

"But the parrot proclaimed that thou hadst the greatest riches that the world can give."

"That is a contented heart. I had that before I saw thee; then only was I unhappy. Now I have thee I am the happiest and therefore the richest of men again."

The princess was silent and trembled.

"Thou hast been false!" she said.

"No," answered the shepherd. "There is nothing false about me save my garment, and that can be put off; underneath is a true heart. But I caught thee by guile. Thou wouldst have naught but what was false, despising a true rose, a true bird, a true diamond. I caught thee with my false appearance, and now——"

Then the princess burst into tears, threw herself into his arms, and said, "Now only that I hate myself

for my pride and love of what was untrue, am I worthy to hold and retain thee."

The queen of the pixies had listened to the tale, and for a while had forgotten her dear dead hedgehog. The king looked in her face and smiled, and she gave him a sad look. She was grateful for his love and consideration for her, but her heart was still sore.

Now there was seated on a stone hard by a very beautiful fairy damsel, with great blue eyes, and cheeks like June wild-rose leaves; and she kept those wonderful eyes of hers fixed upon the schoolmaster, and never drew them away. She drank in every word of his tale; and ever and anon he looked at her, and it gave him great pleasure to see how delighted she was with the tale that he told.

Then said the king, "Are you tired, schoolmaster?"

"No, your Majesty," answered Jeremiah. "And if your gracious consort be willing to hear another story, I shall be prepared to tell her again a tale"

"It is well," said the king.

Then the fairy damsel with the blue eyes put her hands together entreatingly, but said nothing.

Thereupon Mr. Jeremiah smiled at her, and she plucked up heart and smiled in return.

And he considered a moment, and said, "I will tell you now the story of 'Little Jack Horner who sat in a corner.' That is a tale very few people

know nowadays in the world from which I have come, but it was one with which their grandparents were familiar; and I dare be bound that it will not be without interest to you."

Then the little blue-eyed fairy went up to the king and whispered, and he nodded approvingly.

Whereupon she picked a little stalk of whortleberry, on which was one blue fruit, and, going timidly up to Jeremiah, she offered it to him. He took it with a grateful smile and put it into his mouth; and, wonderful to relate, at once it was to him as though his bent back became straight as that of other people—no more stiff and forcing him to stoop. He sat upright against the stone, and could touch it with his shoulder. Then in good cheer he began his second tale.

JACK HORNER

II.

THE PLEASANT TALE OF JACK HORNER

"Some talk of Alexander,
And some of Hercules,
Of Hector and Lysander,
And such great names as these;
But of all the world's brave heroes
There's none that may compare
With little Jack Horner
Who sat in a corner,
And had not a plum to spare."

IT is a strange thing that so little is recollected about this great hero and notable man, except that he ate a Christmas pie; and in eating it put in his thumb and pulled out a plum, and said, "What a good boy am I!" And yet his history is to be found in ancient books; and the picking out of the plum is the least remarkable thing he did of which record remains.

Jack Horner was born at Islington, and he had very respectable and good parents. And an old ballad sings:—

"While little Jack was sweet and young,
If he should chance to cry,
His mother pretty sonnets sung
With fal-la-lul-a-by;

With such a dainty, curious tone,
As Jack sat on her knee,
So that e'er he could go alone
He sang as well as she.
A pretty boy of curious wit,
All people spoke his praise;
And in the corner he would sit
In Christmas holidays.
When neighbours did together meet
To pass away the time,
Why, little Jack was sure to eat
His Christmas pie in rhyme.
And said Jack Horner, 'In a corner
Gets good Christmas pie,
And with his thumb pulls out a plum,'
And said, 'Good boy am I!'
These pretty verses, which he made
Upon his Christmas cheer,
Did gain him love, as it is said,
Of all, both far and near.
The lasses loved his company
Each day above all other;
They knew right well that he would be
A man before his mother."

Now when Jack was grown to the age of twenty his father took him to a good worshipful knight who lived a long, long way distant, and he offered Jack to him as a servant.

The knight consented to receive him, and so the father left him with the knight and bade him be true, faithful, and honest.

It was so that this knight, who came out of Cornwall, belonged to a vastly ancient and noble family

and it had the exclusive honour of the members of it being born with shadows of gold-leaf attached to them instead of the vulgar grey and sometimes black shadows that adhere to common people.

But although the possession of gold-leaf shadows was a great distinction and made the Killigrewes hold up their heads very high, yet this privilege of noble birth was one of considerable inconvenience; for gold-leaf is very liable to get torn, either by falling on thorns or sticking to damp soil.

Moreover, as gold is the most precious of metals, when any rogue came near the knight he endeavoured to tread on his shadow and secure as much of the gold-leaf as he could tear away by so doing. It may, therefore, be well understood that although having a shadow of gold-leaf was a distinction, yet it was not conducive to comfort.

As many gentlemen keep valets to attend to their clothes, to brush, fold, and lay them out, and to pack and unpack their valises for them, so this knight was obliged to have about his person a goldbeater to attend to his shadow. Whenever it was torn he had to hammer out what remained to fill the gap, and he had, further, to unite the torn edges when by beating he had expanded the gold-leaf sufficiently. This process necessarily made the shadow grow more thin and liable to be torn every day, and of course made the knight less inclined to leave the house and expose his gold-leaf shadow to risk.

The goldbeater naturally encouraged his master to remain within the house, so as to save himself trouble, for, indeed, when the knight was at home the goldbeater had nothing whatever to do but eat and drink and amuse himself.

The knight, whose name was Sir Gorman Killigrewe, retained also what he called his varlet, which is much the same as a modern valet. The goldbeater declared that he was not engaged to do anything more to the shadow than patch it when torn, and the care of it daily devolved on the varlet, who was expected to lay it out in the morning and fold it up at night. This latter process was performed on paper that had finely-pounded pounce powder on it to prevent the gold-leaf from adhering to the paper.

Now the varlet was a great rogue, and he clipped the shadow all round so as to reduce it in size without altering it in shape. By this means he cunningly appropriated a considerable amount of gold, which he disposed of to a Jew, without his fraud being detected.

Whenever he was short of money this was how he eased himself of his difficulties.

Now when Jack Horner came into the service of Sir Gorman Killigrewe, he very soon saw that the knight was being ill-treated by the goldbeater and the varlet, who made use of him to serve their own purposes—the one to do nothing, the other

to cheat. He considered it his duty to stop the roguery if he could, but without betraying his fellow-servant.

Now there had been a big black goat killed. So he got the skin, and one night put it over him and drew the head and horns over his own head, and thus disguised he bounded, when the varlet was asleep, into his bedroom, leapt on the bed, and began to caper and make hideous noises as he danced on his chest.

The varlet woke in the most dreadful fright and screamed out.

Then Jack said, "I will dance on you and trample out your wicked heart unless you give up the gold you have stolen from your master."

"It is in my locked drawer, and the key is under my pillow," cried the man in fear.

Then Jack jumped off the bed, took the key, unlocked the drawer, and found a thin edging of gold laid out there. This he removed and ran out of the room. When he placed this edging round the knight's shadow it fitted it exactly, so he summoned the goldbeater and made him hammer till he had fastened it on and made all as it had been before. But Jack soon perceived that the varlet had not told him all. He had given up only the last clipping of the shadow; so he again assumed the goatskin, and again gambolled at night on the man's chest. The varlet, now in great pain and terror, confessed

that he had sold the other clippings to Mordecai the Jew.

Now when Jack Horner heard this he was troubled, for it requires a vast deal of cleverness to get the better of a Jew. However, he determined to try what he could do.

So one day that was a fair-day he started for the market town.

It was a pleasant, sunshiny holiday, and as he went along the road he heard the market people talk about a very aged hermit who lived in a wood on a hill near by. He had never seen a hermit, and, moreover, he desired advice how to proceed with the Jew, so as to recover his master's shadow parings. Accordingly he turned aside from the highway to visit him.

He found the aged man seated in a cave.

> "His locks were white as snow,
> Strange hollow eyes and wrinkled brow,
> His nose and chin did meet."

He was a kindly old man, bent double, and very hard in his breathing. He listened attentively to Jack's story, and Jack told him everything. Then the hermit said, "I am much indebted to your master, Sir Gorman Killigrewe, for he provides me with a new habit every third year. You are an honest lad. I have not long to live, and my soul desires on earth but one thing, a jug of nappy brown

liquor bought at your cost, for I have no money of mine own."

Jack promised to bring it him, and then asked how he was to manage with the Jew Mordecai.

Then the hermit said that he would give him a pair of enchanted pipes and an invisible coat, so that :—

"Whoever hears it when you blow
Shall dance and jump about ;
They shan't be able to stand still
While you the music play,
But after you, o'er dale and hill,
They all shall dance the hay."

The "hay," you must understand, was an old dance much liked at that time.

The advantage of the invisible coat was this :—

"If you should with an hundred meet
When thus you pass along,
Though in the very open street,
Not one in all the throng
Shall ever see you in the least,
But hear the music sound,
And wonder that both man and beast
Is forced to dance around."

Jack took the pipes and put over him the invisible coat, and the old man advised him what he was to do. Then he went on his way.

Now as he proceeded, he saw a woman going to the fair with a basket of eggs on her arm, so to try the effect of his pipes he played a tune.

At once up went her feet, and she capered with might and main, and the eggs in her basket danced as well, till all were broken. Jack threw a piece of gold into the basket to make some amends to the poor woman, and proceeded further.

At length it was his happy lot
To cross a pleasant mead,
When he six lazy fiddlers spied
A-going to the fair.
Beneath their coats crowds at their side,
And many others there.
Amongst the rest, six jolly blades
Behind those crowders came;
They on their shoulders carried crates
With glasses in the same.
Now crowders they be rogues, I know,
And cratesmen they are worse,
They cozen all where'er they go,
And pick each lass's purse.

It must be explained that in Old English a "crowd" is a fiddle, and a "crowder" is a fiddler, and that "to cozen" signifies to cheat.

Then Jack began to play his pipes, and the fiddlers and the men with their crates began to dance after him all along the way into the town and down the street.

Like morice dancers they did prance
Up to their knees in dirt.

He led them before the Jew's house, and there they capered and flung about their legs; the glass

in the crates was broken, and fell in shivers on the pavement. Now Mordecai was in his shop; he had just opened the drawer in which were the clippings of Sir Gorman's gold-leaf shadow, and he was about to melt them together into one solid lump of gold, when he heard the uproar in the street, and looked out of his window, and there saw not only the fiddlers and the crate-men dancing, but all the people who stayed to see the fun, they also were kicking about.

The Jew was so amazed at the sight, that he went to his door, and at once the fit came on him also, and he danced like a young man.

Jack took advantage of the opportunity and collected all the skimpings of gold-leaf, rolled them carefully up, and left without anyone having seen him.

After this, and after he had supplied the hermit with his ale, Jack returned to Sir Gorman Killigrewe. The rascality of the varlet was now so well established that the knight dismissed him. The goldbeater was, however, retained to hammer the shadow into condition again.

Jack Horner had rendered his master so great a service that he took on him now to give the knight his opinion. He strongly advised him to have his shadow of gold-leaf, when put completely to rights, framed and hung up in his hall among the family portraits, where it would come by no

hurt, and to provide himself with a grey-black shadow like ordinary people. The knight considered that it would be a great come-down in life to do this, but finally consented on condition that Jack would furnish him with an ordinary shadow. This also the obliging youth promised to do. He visited the hermit again and asked him in what way he should proceed.

The anchorite told him that the Land of Shadows lay in the heart of the earth, and was ruled over by the King of Shadows, who both supplied new shadows to such as were born into the world, but also took charge of the shades of such as died. The way into his realm was down one of those great swallow-holes, like craters or wells, that gape in all limestone countries. He must descend one of these, taking with him the pipes that made all who heard them to dance. The jacket of invisibility he would not require; but he lent him what would avail, the shoes of adhesion, which would enable him, like a fly, to ascend or descend a perpendicular wall, and even to walk along a ceiling with his head downwards.

So Jack started, and he went to Yorkshire, where he heard were several of these holes in the earth.

When he found one, he proceeded to descend.

This was very laborious and also extremely dangerous work, as the sides were precipitous.

He was obliged to hold on by small projections of rock, and to place his feet in crannies. As he descended further there was so much stalagmite that he found it slippery, and the danger became even greater. Still he had a good heart, he never lost his presence of mind, and by going on, using the utmost precaution, feeling his way when it became too dark to see, he gradually reached a vast hall, and found his feet rest on a level surface.

Then he looked about him, and found that he was in the cavern of the King of Shadows.

The walls on all sides were pierced with pigeon-holes. At the extreme end of the hall sat the king in an iron chair, and he had a table or counter before him. When disengaged, he stretched out his very long, thin legs, and spread his toes apart as far as was possible, then his arms, and distended his fingers; he after that stretched his neck almost to dislocation, and yawned as widely as he could without throwing his jaws out of joint. This was the manner in which he took exercise and diversion. He had much to occupy him.

Down the several swallow-holes on the surface of the earth came fluttering the shadows of men, after they were dead and had no more use for their shadows. The moment a shadow arrived, the king caught it in one hand, laid it on the counter, got a flat iron from a stove hard by, smoothed it out, then rolled

it up, tied a black band round it, affixed a label with the name of the person who had worn it, and the date of his death, the length of time he had used his shadow, and then thrust it away into one of the pigeon-holes on his right hand side. But that was not all his work. He also produced from lockers on his left hand the shadows that would be wanted for newly-born people. These were white, and of a cobweb consistency. He did not send these up one by one, as he received the old shadows; but he despatched them in batches up a funnel-shaped chimney that extended to the surface of the earth and opened as a crater at the top of a high mountain.

You might suppose that there would be a difficulty in doing so. There was none in the least. The whole process was perfectly simple, and it was worked by an ordinary law of Nature. Every well-instructed person is aware that cold air is heavier than hot air. The latter mounts and the former descends. Now the air warmed below ascended by the funnel-shaped opening, and as it went up, wafted the white shadows with it, whereas a cold and heavy current descending through the swallow-holes, conveyed the used and done-with shadows in the most natural manner possible to the counter of the King of Shades below. The result of this continuous circulation of air in the vault was that an eternal draught prevailed there, and conse-

quently the King of Shadows always suffered from a bad cold in his head.

We here above see the sky covered with what we call mackerel clouds, but what we see are not clouds at all. They are the shadows sent up by the king below, to fly about till required.

No sooner do they adhere to such as are newly born than they become discoloured, grey, even black.

"What do you want here?" asked the king, staring at the young man who had invaded his realm, uninvited.

"I am come," answered Jack, "for the shadow of Sir Gorman Killigrewe."

"He has one of his own of gold-leaf."

"Of that he is tired. Now he desires one of ordinary nature, but your best quality."

"Ours are all of one quality, warranted to last a lifetime."

"Will your Majesty graciously let the knight have one?"

"No, I will not. He did not take the trouble, or was too high and mighty, to obtain one when he might. Now he must do without."

Then Jack pulled out his pipes and began to play.

Thereupon ensued a wonderful thing. The shadows that were rolled up and stowed away in the pigeon-holes began to move; they turned over, burst the

bands that tied them, and sent filmy their legs down, then completely uncoiled and fell a-dancing on the floor. Not only was this the case with such as were the shades of the dead, but also with the white gossamer shadows of the unborn. Never was seen before, never again will be seen, so extraordinary a spectacle as the dance of black and white shadows.

The king stretched his legs and his arms; he jumped to his feet; he screamed; he ran about; he turned somersaults; he was as one mad; for all order in his repository was lost.

He pranced before Jack and shrieked to him to desist, and that he might take three, four, a dozen, shadows if he liked for his master, Sir Gorman Killigrewe.

When he had promised this, then Jack Horner ceased playing, and the shadows fell back, and fell into vast confusion and some altercation, none knowing exactly which were their proper lockers, into which to retire.

Jack declined to take more than half a dozen shadows. These he rolled up, tied them in a bundle, slung them over his back, and, thanks to the aid afforded him by the shoes of adhesion, was able to climb the swallow-hole by which he had descended, and reach the upper world in safety.

He hastened to his dear master, who made a good selection, and chose the handsomest shadow from

among the six, and adjusted it to his person. Then he had his gold-leaf shadow framed, and hung up in the hall beside his portrait.

Sir Gorman Killigrewe now went out of doors, and as the day was fine and the sun shone, his shadow ran about, now before him, then behind him; now it was at one side, then on the other. It leaped walls, it scrambled over hedges, it laid itself out flat on a muddy pond, and to the knight's infinite satisfaction it was none the worse for its antics. When he returned from his walk there was not a rent in his entire shadow. He had not left a patch of it behind.

Sir Gorman Killigrewe was so gratified by the services of Jack that he said to him, "My good lad, I will reward you. I have an only daughter; she shall be yours. She is beautiful, and will be wealthy."

Jack was delighted, and he asked where she was, as hitherto he had not seen her.

"Upon my word," answered the knight, "there you raise a difficulty. My daughter was born with a common shadow, like common people; in that she took after her mother. But I at that time felt very keenly on the matter of gold-leaf shadows, and I did not love and regard my daughter as I ought to have done. She was allowed to run about where she liked, and one day she was lost. Since then I have neither seen her nor heard anything of her.

However, yours she shall be as soon as you have found her."

Jack respectfully thanked the knight, and went to the hermit to ask his advice.

The old man answered that his throat was very dry, but that if moistened with nappy ale he might be able to recover his voice.

So Jack went to the town, brought him a jug of good beer, and when the hermit was refreshed he said to him, "My son, I believe that Sir Gorman's daughter has been carried off. I will lend you my little dog, Find. You must let him snuff a shoe of the lost damsel; after that he will be able to track her anywhere. But for this adventure you will not take either the pipes, or the invisible coat, or the shoes of adhesion; no amount of piping will make the giant Grim dance; and he, I strongly suspect, has taken away the young lady. If you wore the invisible coat the dog would not see you and be able to attend you; and there will be nothing to climb, so you will not need the shoes; but take with you the Five Shadows."

Now it happened that there were some shoes of the lost damsel at Sir Gorman's castle, so the dog Find was given them to smell. He snuffed meditatively for a minute, then shook his ears, and started running with his nose to the ground; and Jack went after him.

Well, the little dog ran and ran, ever nosing the

ground, till it arrived in front of a cave that was occupied by a giant.

This very giant could with ease
  Step fifty feet in length ;
Up by the roots he pulled oak trees,
  So mighty was his strength.
His lips, they opened like two gates ;
  His beard hung down like wire ;
His eyes were like two pewter plates;
  His breath was smoke and fire.

How could Jack succeed with such a monster?

Happily he had a sword, which had been lent him by Sir Gorman Killigrewe.

The giant, seeing the dog at the entrance to the cave, ran out, whereupon the little creature began to snap and bark.

Jack brandished his sword and dared the giant to come on. The monster laughed and got his cudgel and advanced, but the dog jumped behind and bit the calves of his legs, and the giant turned to try to drive him away. Then, by a dexterous movement, Jack untied his bundle of shadows and threw them over the giant.

All at once the ogre found himself supplied with six shadows, his own and five in addition, and he turned and stared, and got them entangled the one with the other; some got between his legs; others got across his arm; one got into his eyes and held him in darkness. He struggled and kicked, and the

shadows got knotted, and their entanglement became every moment the greater; and all the while the little dog jumped at his legs and bit him.

Now whilst the giant was thus engaged with all these shadows Jack sprang on him, and by a blow cut off his right hand; then with another he hewed at his ankle and cut off the foot. Thereupon the giant fell prostrate, and Jack succeeded in cutting off his head.

Then he entered the cave and found the poor young lady mewed up there in a cage. The giant had kept her there as his singing bird, and he would never give her water or sugar unless she sang to him a pretty ditty.

Jack released her from the cage, conducted her home, was married to her, and lived ever after most happily. As the ballad says :—

> He married the fair beauty bright;
> Her charms he did admire;
> And since her father was a knight,
> Young Jack was made a squire.

When this story was ended, then all the pixies began to clap their hands, and the fairy with the blue eyes laughed and applauded as well.

The queen also had for the time been interested in the tale, and had forgotten her sorrow. But unhappily just as Mr. Jeremiah finished, her eye fell on the skin of the poor beast which had been hung on one of the stones of the circle, and her grief again

obtained the mastery, and she sobbed bitterly. The king made a sign to the blue-eyed fairy, and she brought Mr. Toope another little purple berry. He ate it, and bowed his thanks to her; and no sooner had he swallowed it than his lame leg became flexible as the other. He started up delighted, and stamped, and found himself as other men in this respect. So he was very greatly rejoiced; and, full of thankfulness, he obeyed a sign from the king, and began to relate his third story.

III.

THE STORY OF HEMING

THERE lived in Norway, in the island of Torgit, a man named Aslak, who was rich and owned the whole island and the fisheries around. He had two sons, and the name of the first was Biorn, and the name of the second was Heming.

Olaf the Saint was then king, and he came one day to Torgit and sat at the table of Aslak, and ate and drank. Then his host brought in his two sons, and the king spoke to the two boys, but suddenly became grave. He had taken the youngest on his knee, but he set him down and said nothing.

Then Aslak asked the king if the child had in any way offended him. But Olaf said, "I can see into the future. Well will it be for your son and my brother Harald Hardrede if they never meet; but I foresee that one will cause the death of the other. And what is more," continued the king, "I foresee that my brother Harald will one day be king over Norway."

Now it was well known in the land that Olaf had the faculty of seeing beforehand things that

should come to pass. When, therefore, King Olaf was gone, then Aslak sent a faithful servant with his little boy far away into the north, to be given to be fostered and brought up by a Finn and his wife, where he believed that Harald Hardrede would never find him, even if he came to hear of King Olaf's saying. Now it must be told that Saint Olaf was killed in a great battle that was fought in 1030, and he was succeeded by his son Magnus, who was not quite eleven years old when his father fell, and for five years Norway was under the dominion of the Danes. Magnus died in 1047, and as he left no sons behind him, Harald, the brother of Saint Olaf, was the undisputed heir to the throne.

When Harald was king, then he went all about the land seeing the great men, and feasting in their houses. So he purposed to pay a visit to Aslak at Torgit, and he sent him word to come and see him.

Now it fell out one night that the king woke in his sleep. In those times kings and nobles, and indeed all folk, lived in great wooden halls, with side aisles, much in shape like churches. Down the middle of the hall ran a trough in which fires were made, and before the fire on each side were benches, and when there was a feast, tables of boards on trestles were set up before the benches. There were wooden pillars that supported the roof,

and, between each bay, boards were erected so as to turn each into a separate room, and in each such room was a bed. Now King Harald, as he woke, looked into the hall where was the fire, and he saw an old man sitting there warming his hands. He wore a very broad-brimmed hat, and a great, long wadmal cloak of dark grey.

The king had never seen this old man before, and he called out to him to know who he was, and why he came there. Then the old man stood up, and as he stood up there hopped two tame ravens on to his shoulders, one on each shoulder. He came into the king's bedroom and stood by the king's bed. Then Harald saw that the old man had but one eye.

Again the king addressed him, and said, "Who are you, and what do you desire?"

Then the old man said, "I am Odin, the god whom your forefathers worshipped. But you and most men in Norway have left me, and my temples are in ruins. You also are a Christian in name, but inasmuch as your life is rather that of a heathen than that of one who worships Christ, I have a liking for you. And now I am come to warn you that Aslak of Torgit has a son named Heming, and he is doomed to be your death-bane unless you first slay him. Therefore cut him off if you can, for one of you two must fall before the other. The king Olaf said it, and I say it also."

Then all at once the old man with his ravens vanished.

In the next room to King Harald slept a man called Nicolas, who was his kinsman. The king called to Nicolas and woke him, and bade him come and speak with him. Then Nicolas did so, and Harald asked how many sons Aslak had. Nicolas said he did not know, but he had been as a boy on Torgit and had there seen one called Biorn, and another, a very active, sturdy little fellow, whose name he forgot, and of whom he had heard nothing since.

When Aslak arrived before King Harald, and heard that the king desired to feast at his house, then Aslak began to make difficulties. He said that he would pay all the expense such a visit would entail, but that he was not prepared to receive his royal master.

"But why do you object to receive me?" asked the king.

"I do not consider my house splendid enough to receive such great men as you," answered Aslak.

"If there is a big hall, that will suffice," said Harald.

"I have not the vessels and furniture wherewith to accommodate you," said Aslak.

"Say what you will," exclaimed Harald, "at the time I appoint I shall be with you."

"And when will that be?" asked Aslak.

"No later than to-morrow," answered the king.

Then Aslak went home and made all ready as well as he could. And on the morrow the king arrived with a retinue of a hundred men.

Aslak went to meet him, and welcomed him, and led him to his house; and the king saw a grand hall, hung round with shields and curtains of many colours.

"If the feasting is as noble as the decoration of the hall," said the king, "then indeed we shall do well here."

That evening there was a great banquet, and all was of the best, and the king was highly pleased.

Next morning he called the master of the house to him and said, "Aslak, do you know the law made by Olaf the Saint?"

"What law?" asked the man addressed.

"Is it not a law that no bonder shall have a son fostered among heathens and away from his home?"

"That is news to me," answered Aslak; "I thought every man might send his son to be brought up by whom and where he would."

"I have heard something concerning you," said the king.

"What have you heard?" asked Aslak.

"I have been told that you have a son fostered far away from home. Is that so?"

"Who said that?" asked Aslak.

"I told the king this," said Nicolas; "and I have got myself into difficulties, like one who is between

the skerries and the billow. I can remember, many years ago, there was a little fellow here who was said to be your son. I was then ten years old, and I remember now that his name was Heming. We played together, and he surpassed me and all his playmates. Yet he was younger than myself, and was but six years old. I have never heard more of him."

Then the king asked, "Aslak, what has become of this son of yours?"

"It is true," answered the bonder reluctantly; "I had a son of that age and that name, but he lost his senses and had to be put away at a great distance. Since then I have heard no news of him, and I do not know whether he be alive or dead."

Then said the king, "This is my decision. We will go on our way, and in twelve months we shall be back here again, and by that time let your son Heming be here that I may see him."

"I cannot understand why you should desire this," answered Aslak, "but I have no choice in the matter, so must obey."

Then the king departed.

But next year at the same time Harald returned, as he had said, to Torgit, and was well received and entertained by Aslak.

Then Harald said to the master of the house, "Where is your son whom you have brought up in secret? Lead him into my presence."

"I have forgotten all about sending for him," answered Aslak. "He is a very long way off."

The king was angry, and he said, "You incur my heaviest displeasure, yet I will not punish you as you deserve. We will go on our way, and be absent for two months; and at the end of that time I shall return, and it will fare badly with you unless you produce your son."

"The matter is not worth such fuss being made of it," said Aslak.

Then the king departed to the mainland and visited various portions till a month before winter, and then he returned to Torgit.

Aslak received him well, and seemed most cheerful and provided a splendid banquet.

Next morning the king said to Aslak, "Where is your son Heming, about whom you have made such difficulties?"

"I forgot you were so impatient to see him," answered the farmer.

Then the king said angrily, "Now I will not be put off in this way. Here I remain as your guest till he arrives. So I advise you to despatch men after him. And if you fail to produce him, I shall soon put an end to your giving of banquets."

Then Aslak called to him a steward he had named Kalf, and two of his servants, and he said to them, "I must send you away north till you come to a headland called Framnes. There you must disembark,

and four men with you, Kalf; and leave two to guard the boat. You will find a path going through the forest. You must follow this track for four days, and towards sunset you will come out of the forest, and you will see a valley before you, between high cliffs. The valley does not divide. You will pursue it till you light on a little farm. There you will find no more than an old man and his wife. They will ask you what you want, and you tell the truth. Accept their hospitality, and spend the night there; but one keep watch all night. If you see a tall, handsome man who comes in and sits by the fire, then rise and salute him by the name of Heming, and tell him that he is to come here to me, and that my life and his brother's depend on his coming. He may hesitate, but I think he is certain to obey the summons."

Then Kalf and six men started on their northward journey, and they did all as the farmer had ordered, and at the time Aslak had said they arrived at the little farm, and saw there the old man and his wife, who received them with great cordiality when they knew whence they came.

Kalf and his men went to bed, and the old man and his wife sat by the fire talking. Then she said, "Our foster-son is late in coming home to-night."

The old man answered: "I'm a poor man, but I would give all I have that he should remain abroad for a week. What is the meaning of these fellows coming here but to take him away from us?"

"I do not think I can bear to lose my dear foster-boy," said the old woman.

Just then in came a tall, handsome young man in a scarlet kirtle, and he had the spoils of the chase under his belt. He had a strip of gold round his head, and long hair flowing from under it over his shoulders. Never had Kalf seen so fine a man. His foster-parents started to their feet, and saluted him under the name of Heming. He answered them affectionately, and seated himself beside the fire. The old man asked what sport he had had. Heming answered that he had seen plenty of wild fowl, but had taken only just what he wanted. Then he inquired who were the strangers that had arrived. The old man replied that they were messengers of his father sent to fetch him home.

"He has been long enough about it," said Heming.

Then Kalf stood up and saluted the young man, and told him all his father had said.

"I don't know," he answered. "I 'm not over-ready to go."

"Do not jump at a decision before you know all the circumstances," said Kalf. "Your father's and brother's lives are in the scale."

Heming answered that he would give no reply at once. On the morrow early they were to go back by the way that they had come, and if he did not appear before they started in the boat, they were to give him up.

Next morning early they departed without him, and did not halt till they reached the sea, when they entered into the ship. But almost immediately they saw Heming coming down to the shore on snow-shoes. He jumped into the vessel. Kalf and his men were glad, and they all started together for Torgit.

Aslak received his son with great warmth. Heming arrived when most men were at church, and as the congregation dispersed, and the king came towards the hall, Aslak led his son before Harald, who looked hard at him and knitted his brows. This was the man who must fall before him, or he before this man.

Harald said to him, "In what does your main skill lie?"

Heming replied that the old man and his wife with whom he had been reared were hardly good judges, but they considered he could do most things well: shoot and swim, and go on skates. For his own part, he considered himself most skilful on snow-shoes.

"Very well," said the king, "I will put you to the test in all these accomplishments."

Now Aslak came to the king and said, "All is ready for your departure, sire."

Harald replied, "We will not depart to-day."

In the island was a wood, and, by order of the king, all men went to the wood. Then Harald planted a spear in the ground, and he took a bow, put an arrow on the string, and shot up into the air.

The arrow went up high as a lark can soar, then turned and fell, and so fell that it stuck in the end of the spear that was upright. Thereupon he bade Heming try his skill.

Heming took his bow, put an arrow on the string, and shot so high that none could follow and see it turn; and when it came down it struck the cleft in the king's arrow that stood in the end of the spear, and split it.

Thereat the king waxed red and wroth. He plucked up the spear and cast it, and he cast it so far that all marvelled. He bade Heming see if he could surpass that; and Heming said he would not try, it was such a royal cast. Harald insisted that he should do so, and make one attempt to surpass if he could.

Heming obeyed reluctantly, and his spear flew far beyond where that of the king had fallen.

Then Harald took his knife and stuck the blade in an oak tree, and shot with his bow, and the arrow stuck in the haft of his knife. Then Heming took his arrows. The king stood by him, and said, "Your arrows are inlaid with gold. You must be a marvellous workman."

"I did not inlay them myself," said Heming, and drew his bow and shot, and his arrow pierced the haft of the king's knife, split it, and penetrated to the sharp end of the blade, where it entered the handle.

The king's face was red as blood, so angry was he. He said, "We will try something more," and he shot with his bow and pierced a slender branch on the top of a tree. Heming also shot, and he split an oak-apple on the end of that same branch.

All who saw this marvelled.

Then said the king, "You shall take an oak-apple and put it on the head of your brother Biorn, and aim at it with your spear from no nearer distance than this, and if you miss the oak-apple you shall die."*

Heming answered, "My life is in your hands; I will not attempt this."

Biorn said, "Brother, do not hold back. Every man must do what he can to save his life."

Heming said, "I can do what is desired, but only if you, brother, will stand perfectly still."

"I shall do that, undoubtedly," said Biorn.

"Let the king stand by," said Heming, "and see if I hit the gall-nut."

"Nay," answered the king, "I will stand by you whilst you shoot, but Odd Ufeyson shall stand near Biorn and watch how the arrow goes."

Then Odd went, as he said, to see fair play; and Heming took up the position appointed by the king, and before he raised his spear he said, "God be my

* This is the Tell story. But the story of Heming was composed before Tell was born. The earliest MS. of the story, however, dates from 1337; the same is told of Palnatoki, of Eindrith Ilbreith, and of a certain Egill. The story of Palnatoki was written in the twelfth century. Tell lived in 1307.

witness that I had rather die myself than see my brother fall. If evil comes of this, let the blood that is spilt be on the head of King Harald."

Then Heming took steady aim, and flung his spear. The spear flew, direct as an arrow, and it passed between the gall-nut and the crown of Biorn's head; and Biorn was not hurt in the least.

Then the king came up, and he asked Odd where the oak-apple was.

Odd answered, "Will you believe me if I tell you?"

The king said, "One must bear whatever news is told."

Then Odd said, "He has shot better than I could have thought. The spear raised the oak-gall, passed beyond it, and left it on the head where it had been placed."

"I could not have believed this if I had not seen it," said the king.

The king looked at Heming, and saw that an arrow, inlaid with gold, was in his belt. He said to Heming, "What is that arrow stuck there for?"

"Sire," answered the bold archer, "had I struck my brother with my spear, this arrow would have pierced your heart."

The king became red and angry, but said nothing.

So they returned to the house, and caroused that night.

Next morning Aslak came before the king, and said to him, "All is ready for your departure, sire."

But Harald answered, "I shall stay here another day."

Then Harald turned to some Icelanders who were about him, and said, "We will test his powers to-day in swimming"; and he asked them to swim with Heming, but they all declined.

Then he turned to his kinsman Nicolas, and bade him go into the water with Heming.

Nicolas said, "I do not know what the end will be; but I will do my best if you desire it."

The king ordered him to strip and dive against Heming.

So both men cast off their clothes, and prepared to swim.

"We will race each other in the water," said Heming.

So they swam for long, and dived, and after a while Nicolas said, "Heming, shall we turn back?"

"Why turn back?" answered Heming. "I am not tired."

They continued swimming a while longer, and then Nicolas said, "Shall we not turn back to land?"

"Turn back if you will," answered Heming. "I shall swim further."

Nicolas now swam to a rock, crawled upon it, and was so exhausted that he fainted.

After a while Heming came to him, and asked him how he fared.

Nicolas answered curtly, "That is no concern of yours; go your own way."

"I shall not leave you here to die," said Heming; "and I see very well you have no power to swim to land yourself. I will carry you on my back."

So he took Nicolas on his back, and swam with him to the place whence they had started. Nicolas was so stiff that he could hardly creep to where his clothes were. The king asked him how matters had gone. Nicolas answered that unless Heming had carried him, the king would never have seen him alive again.

Then the king was very angry. He threw off his clothes, and bade Heming come on into the water with him and wrestle there, and see which could hold the other under till he was drowned.

Aslak whispered to his son, "Run away into the wood. The king is determined to have your life."

"No, father," answered Heming; "when eagles meet they fight out their quarrel."

Heming had been seated on a stone above the water, and now the king caught him, and both plunged into the sea and wrestled with each other in the water.

Those on shore could see only the lashing of the waves, the foam, and then one head up, and then another. The day was declining when this game began, and at last it became too dark for any to see.

Presently the king came up on the strand and began to clothe himself. He was so angry, none of his men dared speak a word to him. He walked to the hall of Aslak and seated himself. There was little cheer at supper that evening; the king's face was black as night, and Aslak was sad because of his son.

The king sat in the high seat, and the fires were kindled up.

Then in at the door came Heming, and went up the hall before the king, and put a knife on his knee; and all knew it was one that Harald had worn in his belt that day. No one dared inquire, but all believed that the king had taken the knife with him into the water, and had tried to stab Heming with it whilst they were together, and that Heming had wrested it from his murderous hand.

All went early to bed that night.

Next morning Aslak came before the king, and said, "Sire, all is ready for your departure if you wish to leave."

The king answered, "I will not tarry here longer, but will leave Torgit with all my men, and will take Heming with me."

It was so. He departed, and he made the young man go along with him.

He sailed till he came under the mountain called the Smalsar Horn, that jutted into a tremendous precipice over the sea.

"Now," said Harald, "let me see what your success is on snow-shoes."

"There lies very little snow on the mountain, and what there is is whipped into drifts, and the rest is rough," answered Heming.

"Where all ways are smooth," answered the king, "there any man can go."

Heming then put on his snow-shoes.

The mountain was steep, and had few ledges on it.

Heming started and zigzagged up the mountain on his snow-shoes, and made the circuit of the top, and then came down rapidly. All who looked on thought it was the most wonderful achievement that they had ever seen on snow.

When Heming came to the king, he said, "Sire, I hope now that you are satisfied, and that you will put me to no more tests of skill. For my part, I have done."

"No," answered the king. "I will try you once more, and once only. Now you shall ascend the mountain aslant, and when you have reached the top, then I require you to shoot down directly towards the edge of the precipice, and check yourself on the very brink."

Heming exclaimed, "If you are resolved on my death, you can kill me in shorter fashion than that."

Harald said, "If you will not venture this, you shall be flung over the edge."

"The saying goes, 'Let every man snatch at every chance,'" retorted Heming. "But it seems to me that there is little choice between being cast over the edge and casting oneself over. Whichever way is a bad way, and a way without escape."

Then Aslak went before the king, and said, "Sire, take all my possessions, and spare the life of my son."

But Harald answered roughly, "Keep your possessions; I want them not. But I am resolved to see Heming do this adventure."

Others now interfered, especially Odd the Icelander, but Heming bade all desist. The king was resolute, and they would gain nothing by their intercession. Then Odd drew Heming aside and said to him privately—

"When I was in the Holy Land I got possession of a great relic. It is the winding-sheet in which S. Stephen, the first martyr, was buried. I wear it wrapped round me. Now this I value highly; and I had intended to take it with me to Iceland and there to build a church and dedicate it to S. Stephen, and to put the winding-sheet therein. But it seems to me that now is a good chance of proving whether it is worth more than any common piece of linen, and also of doing you a good turn if I may. Take this winding-sheet that I strip off me, and put it about your waist as a white shirt."

"God reward you for the good intent," answered

Heming. "I will do as you say; the sheet at least can do no harm."

So they separated, and none knew what had passed between them.

Then Heming took the winding-sheet, and he first wrapped a portion round his waist and then threw the length that remained over his left shoulder and fastened the end with his girdle. In his hand he held a stout balancing pole.

So he started.

Now the king and his men went up the height to the edge of the cliff, and the king stood near it supporting himself on his spear. He wore a red cloak with a strap to fasten it, that was itself made to hold by a pin. He took out the pin and put it in his belt. Nicolas and the rest stood behind Harald, with their hands resting on their hips.

Heming now mounted to the top of the Smalsar Horn, and there put on his snow-shoes.

He started and came down at a tremendous pace, guiding himself with his balancing pole. All looked on breathlessly, and he shot down hard upon the spot where stood the king, and now he drove his pole into the snow and the turf under it, and endeavoured to check his pace. Just as he neared the precipice he leaped high in the air and shook off his snow-shoes, which flew away over the cliff brow. But he himself was carried forward by the force wherewith he had come down, and he caught at the king's cloak.

The king bowed his head suddenly, and the mantle came away in Heming's hand, and over the edge of the precipice he went, carrying the red cloak with him. Then Harald said, "If I had not happened to unpin my mantle, he would have carried me over along with him."

Now Odd the Icelander was so wroth at the cruelty of the king, that he shouted out, "And well had it been had that been the case. But one thing I know. If you and Heming had fared together at the same time out of this world, and gone before God's throne, then you would have been cast into the outer darkness for this deed alone."

The king was so angry to hear this that he ordered his men to throw Odd over the precipice after Heming. Now there was a whole party of Icelanders present, and one of these stood forth and said to the king, "If you do this to our countryman, Odd, you do so to all of us. But if you do, know then, O king, that there is not a man in that land of ice and snow who will not swear to take no ease till he has slain thee."

Harald was silent for a moment, and then said, "Well, I will not insist on this. But this is my sentence. Let Odd at once leave my presence, and in spring leave Norway. And as soon as he is out of the land I will outlaw him, that should he ever set foot in Norway, or run into one of the fiords of Norway, it will be at the choice of any man to slay

him, and I will give its weight in silver to him who then brings me his head."

"That must fall which is fated," said Odd, and he left the king's presence, and next spring sailed for his Icelandic home.

Now must be told of Heming, after he shot over the brink of the precipice.

It will be recollected that Odd, the Icelander, had given him the winding-sheet of S. Stephen. Now as the brave Heming fell through the air, the wind caught and swelled out the folds of the great sheet of linen both about his waist and his back and shoulder, so he was let down more slowly than he expected, and was caught in a projecting mass of rock.

At first he was so giddy and amazed that he knew not whether he was alive or dead, but after a while his senses came to him, and he scrambled on to a ledge of the cliff and ensconced himself there, where none could see him and where he would be safe.

The king and all believed that he had fallen into the sea, or on to the skerries at the foot of the cliff, and had been dashed to pieces.

Heming did not deem it wise to stir till night fell Now as soon as the sun went down all the sky was lighted up with a grand display of the Aurora Borealis—the Northern Lights. There was an arc of rose-coloured fire, and rays that shot like golden spears across the firmament.

Lighted by this glorious illumination of the heavens Heming began to climb the cliff, and being very sure of foot, he got a long way up. But just at the top the rock overhung, and he did not know what to do. Then he heard a voice speaking, and looked up, and saw the Icelander, Odd, who stretched out his hand, and Heming laid hold of it and was pulled to the summit.

Thereupon Heming thanked Odd, and Odd told him how that he had to fly from the king, but had come to the brow of the cliff to see if he could observe any traces of Heming. He advised his friend to leave the country as quickly as possible. Heming would at once have returned to Odd the winding-sheet, but Odd would not receive it then, as Heming was still in great danger of his life. "But," said he, "if we meet again, then you shall give it me."

"Yes," answered Heming; "and if we meet again, and things go well with me, I will give a third of all I have to you for what you have done to me."

So they separated, and Heming stole homewards, but very cautiously.

And as he drew near home he saw lights in the church, so he went to the church door and looked in, and found there his father and brother on their knees; and they were praying for him.

You may well believe that Aslak and Biorn were rejoiced to see Heming alive. They took counsel

together, and resolved that Heming should leave the country and call himself by another name, lest it should reach the ears of King Harald that he was still alive.

"Then," said Heming, "let me be known henceforth as the Outcast from Home. If you hear tidings at any time of the doings of the Outcast, you will know that they concern me."

After that, in great secret, Aslak contrived to get one of his boats away, with Heming his son in it; and Heming did not remain in Norway, but crossed over into England.

This was at the time that Edward the Confessor was king.

Heming arrived in the Thames and called himself "Outcast," and went before Edward the king, and asked to be given entertainment for the winter. The king consented, and Heming promised the king that if there was any fighting to be done, he would help him.

Nothing, however, is told of anything that Heming did, except that he made some money by merchandise, and then he sent word to Odd in Iceland that he was ready to pay him a third of all he had made and to return to him the shroud that had been lent him.

So Odd came to England, and there was a warm meeting between him and "Outcast."

Now whilst they were together, Odd spent the

money Heming gave him in buying a church bell and timber wherewith to lade his vessel, for he wished to do as he had made up his mind: build a church in Iceland and dedicate it to S. Stephen.

One day in spring King Edward the Confessor held a great gathering at Westminster, and to it, among others, came a stranger, who bore a very beautiful sword, and wore a handsome cloak lined with fur. Odd looked at him with surprise, went straight up to him, and asked him his name.

The stranger said he was called Athalbert.

Then Odd asked him where he got that sword and cloak.

The man replied that he had bought both.

Odd said, "My brother had just that sort of sword, and a very similar cloak. He sailed away from Iceland two or three years ago, and I have never heard tidings of him since. My belief is that you have killed him, and possessed yourself of his goods. Now I will avenge his death."

Then Heming, or Outcast as he was called, interfered, and begged Athalbert to tell the truth. Athalbert at last confessed that he had fallen in with the ship of Odd's brother, had fought it, had killed all on board, and had taken the plunder.

Now the matter was brought to the notice of King Edward, but Odd could hardly be restrained from drawing his sword and killing the man.

King Edward heard the case, and then he pro-

nounced sentence that Athalbert should be given over to Odd to kill, and that all his property and ship should fall to the share of Odd. "But," said the king, "though it is just that Athalbert die, yet I hate to have blood shed, and if you will grant me a favour you will spare his life."

Odd answered that he would do as the king judged. Then Athalbert was banished, and his ship, with all its lading, given to the Icelander, and in it he found much of his brother's goods.

Now as soon as a fair wind blew he sailed away. Presently the wind rose to a storm, and to save himself and his two vessels, Odd was forced to run into a fiord in Norway, and that was the Drontheim fiord.

It happened that King Harald was there then, and when he heard of the arrival of Odd he was full of rage, and he thought that now he would punish the Icelander for what he had once said. But as for Heming, he believed he was dead. So he gave orders for his long warships to run out and block the mouth of the fiord, and intercept Odd lest he should escape; at the same time Harald armed his men and lined the shore.

Now when Odd's shipmates saw this, they were dismayed, but he bade them not be downcast; he told them that their lives were in God's keeping, and that the God who had preserved a dear friend of his, when falling over a cliff, could preserve him also in this emergency.

Presently a strong wind from the east sprang up, and Odd spread every sail, and set his men to row with all their might, and he led the way with the ship taken from Athalbert, which had a beak of bronze; and what with the force of the wind and the stout arms of the rowers, he ran against one of the king's warships and sank it, and sailed out of the fiord with his own merchant vessel in its wake.

The king, Harald, is said to have been furious at this having happened.

Odd sailed away to Iceland, and he landed in Middle Frith, in the north of the island, and there he built the church of the timber he brought from England, and hung his bell, and there he put the winding-sheet that he brought from the Holy Land, and which had saved the life of his friend Heming.

[Now I must tell you that I, who write this story in English, have been in the church. I was at the place which is called Mellr one Sunday in 1861. Indeed, the exact day was July 20th, and I attended service in that church. But at that time I did not know the story of the foundation of the church, for the Icelandic history of Heming had not at that time got into my hands. If it had, I would have climbed up the roof to see if the bell that now hangs there is that which came from England in the time of Edward the Confessor. Of course the old oak beams brought from England have been replaced many times, but the site of the church has not been altered, nor has

that of Odd's house, of which I made a sketch.—S. B. G.]

Now we will return to Heming in England.

In the year 1066 Edward the Confessor died, and the English people elected Harold, son of Earl Godwin, to be king. This was the best choice that could have been made, for Earl Harold had really governed England for many years under the amiable but weak-minded Edward. He was an energetic man and just, and a brave warrior.

Unhappily his brother Tostig became furiously jealous, and thought that, as the choice of the English people had not fallen on him, he would win the crown by force of arms. At the same time William, Duke of Normandy, laid claim to England.

If Harold had had only the Normans to resist, he very likely might have driven them back across the seas, but through the wicked spite of his own brother Tostig, he was obliged to fight him as well as Duke William.

Tostig went to Sweyn, king of Denmark, and asked him to assist him, but Sweyn refused. Then Tostig went to Norway, and invited King Harald Hardrede to help him to conquer England; and the Norwegian king, who was ever ready to do acts of violence and injustice, though he had no quarrel at all with his namesake, the king of the English, yet promised to help to overrun England.

So, in September, 1066, he sailed away with the

largest fleet which up to that time had ever left the shores of Norway. About twenty thousand warriors embarked. Harald sailed away, taking with him his wife, the daughter of the king of Russia, and his two daughters, and went to Orkney, where he made the earls swear to obey him, and give him as large a body of men as they could collect, and ships likewise. Earl Tostig also had collected many men, so that the total force amounted to thirty thousand men in three hundred and fifty ships.

King Harald Hardrede left his queen and daughters in Orkney, and sailed down the coast of Scotland to Northumberland. Then he came south, plundering and burning, and sailed up the mouth of the Humber, and entered the river Ouse, and landed at a place called Riccall, and there left Earl Paul of Orkney with the ships, and marched inland.

They came to Fulford by the Ouse, and there were encountered by Earls Edwin and Morkere, whom the English king, Harold, had sent against them. A great battle was fought, and the English made part of the army of the Northmen to fly, and pursued them; but then at this juncture King Harald Hardrede arrived, and so furious was his onslaught that the English were routed and fled; many were killed, and Tostig and the king of Norway pursued their advantage and captured York.

Harold of England was now aware of the great danger that menaced him from the north, and he

gathered men together to march to the assistance of his earls, and Heming at once offered his services; they were gladly accepted. English Harold hasted north, and came suddenly upon the Northmen, who did not expect him, at Stamford Bridge, on the Derwent.

The day (September 25th) was warm, and the Norsemen had thrown aside their armour, and were lounging about on both sides of the river.

As soon as English Harold's army appeared, they sprang to arms in some confusion. Norse Harald mounted his black horse, but as he spurred it, it stumbled and threw him. He rose in haste, and remounted, saying, "A fall brings luck to a farer."

English Harold saw this, and he asked his men who that was whose horse had thrown him. Then Heming, who stood at his side, said, "Sire, that stout man with the fine helmet who fell is the king, Hardrede himself."

"Then," said English Harold, "his luck has deserted him."

The English king sent forward messengers. He was grieved that his brother should be in arms against him, and he desired to detach him from his allies. But he himself rode with his messengers, for he would speak to his brother himself. Then, at the summons, Earl Tostig went forward, and English Harold said to him, "Come to your proper duty, and you shall have all Northumberland."

"And what will be given to my friend Harald of Norway?" asked Tostig.

"Seven feet of good English ground, and if that suffices not, an inch or two more."

Then Tostig broke off communications, for he would not desert his Norse allies.

When Tostig rode back, King Harald Hardrede said to him, "Who was that man spoke with you?"

Tostig said it was his own brother, the king.

Then Norse Harald was angry, and vowed if he had known it, he would have had him murdered, ambassador though he were.

Immediately the battle began, and a furious contest ensued. The Norsemen were drawn up in the shape of a heart, with their shields and spears outwards; and thus the English could not break them. But presently the invaders thought the English were thrown into confusion, and they opened their ranks to charge. At once the English turned and rushed in on them; and there ensued a hand-to-hand fight.

King Harald Hardrede stood by his banner, and he hewed with his sword and dealt mighty blows. It seemed as though he was turning the course of affairs, for the English began to fall back.

At that moment Heming drew his bow to his full strength and shot, and his arrow flew and pierced King Harald Hardrede in the throat, so that he fell at the foot of his banner.

Then the king plucked at the arrow and tore it

out, and lo! it was inlaid with gold. He looked at it, and said, "The like of this I have seen before; it is the arrow of Heming, the son of Aslak. Now what is feyed, falls sure. I must die by his hand."

And in truth he spake no more.

That was a mighty battle, and in it the English completely routed and cut to pieces the army of the Norsemen.

Four days later Duke William of Normandy landed in Sussex. Had it not been for the treachery of Tostig and the war in the north, he could not have landed. Harold had to return south, with his troops exhausted by forced marches, to encounter him. The fatal battle of Hastings ensued on October 14th. We hear no more of Heming, except that he left England after the fall of Harold, the English king, and paid a visit to Italy.

"This," said the schoolmaster, "is a historical tale, and is accordingly instructive."

"But I do not like to be instructed," said the queen, pouting.

Then the king said, "My good schoolmaster, you must forget that you *are* a schoolmaster, and must endeavour to amuse, without giving instruction. And because on this occasion you have endeavoured to convey information surreptitiously, I shall not allow my daughter, the Princess Noyalen, to give you any fruit."

"Sire," answered Mr. Jeremiah, "you have given me on this occasion something better than a whortleberry. You have told me the name of that lovely little angel who listens to my stories with delight, and across whose sweet face no shadow of vexation has fallen, even although I did convey some historical information in the form of a tale. The English general public, I am well aware——"

"Never mind about the English general public," retorted the king irritably; "you are now in the world of pixies, and must endeavour to please them, and them only."

"I stand condemned," said Jeremiah; "and happy am I that I can stand upon both legs with ease—a thing that I was never before able to do, as one was stiff and shorter than the other. I see by the pitiful and sympathetic face of the Princess Noyalen that she is sore at heart not to be able to give me another of those healing, invigorating little berries. I will endeavour to deserve one with the next story I shall tell, my fourth, by making of it a vehicle for no instruction, moral or historical. Allow me, your Majesty, to reseat myself."

IV.

CLEOMENE

THERE lived a queen named Cleomene; she was extremely beautiful, she ruled over a great nation, had large armies, a full House of Lords, three palaces, but was able to think and talk only of purely domestic matters. Her mind never went, so to speak, abroad. It remained fettered to her kitchen and store-closet.

When profound or far-reaching matters were discussed before her in Privy Council, Cleomene sat silent, till she found an opportunity to remark that the tapioca pudding had been burnt. When bulletins arrived relative to military events connected with her armies, she took no interest in them, but concerned herself greatly when the knives had their edges turned by the rotary cleaning apparatus. Physicians were consulted, and decided that she suffered from "mental inertia," for which pills and powders would avail nothing.

One day the queen was out walking, when she happened to sit down by the side of a lake, under a flowering elder-tree, and the elder-flowers scattered their pollen over her as she sat.

Now it is the property of the elder to open the eyes to things of the spirit world. And, as the flower-dust lodged on the lashes of Cleomene's eyes, she rubbed them, and at once acquired the power to see things previously invisible.

This is what she saw: an elf-mother washing her children in the lake, and sponging them with a puff-ball. Then one of the children got hold of its mother's nose and pulled it, and, as the nature of elf-bodies is similar to the nature of india-rubber, the child pulled out the nose to five times its normal length.

And, for the same reason, when the children screamed they literally stretched their mouths from ear to ear. This was all so droll, that Cleomene burst into a fit of laughter, and pointed, first at the elf-mother's nose, then at the mouths of the infants, and fell from one fit of laughter into another.

The elf-mother turned round, and was very angry. Her eyes flashed, and she said—

"Cleomene, why do you fleer and mock?"

But the queen could not answer, but laughed the louder and more convulsively.

Then the elf-mother came before her with an angry countenance, and said, "Because you have seen me washing my babes, and have jeered and mocked, and you have had no feeling for my troubles, and no admiration for the beauty of my little ones, you shall travel and undergo hardship and adventure till you have composed an entire poem of seven lines, a week

of verse, every line rhyming with what I asked at first :—

'Cleomene, why do you fleer and mock?'

And each line must contain an idea suggested by some experience of your own."

Then all at once the elves disappeared.

Slowly, much puzzled in mind, the queen returned home. When she reached her palace, she learned that during her absence a revolution had broken out. Riots had occurred ; the Ministry had resigned ; the Republicans were in power, and had turned the State upside down, and were tinkering at its bottom. Royalty had been abolished, and the throne had been converted into a Bath-chair for the use of the indigent poor who were paralysed in their extremities. A provisional Ministry had been set up, which undertook that all provisions should be sold at half-price to *bonâ-fide* artisans. A Committee of Public Safety had been appointed to meet and counteract the machinations of the queen, and this committee had resolved to put her in a barrel and set her adrift in the ocean, with seven currant buns and a bottle of orange cordial for her sustenance. But as a body of electors belonging to the teetotal persuasion protested, the cordial was disallowed, and it was resolved that she should have the buns only.

This sentence was at once carried into execution, and Cleomene, enclosed in a hogshead, was committed to the winds and waves

Cleomene wept all the first day, and had no appetite; nevertheless, from a sense of duty, she ate one bun. On the second day she did not cry so much, but felt dull and stupefied. She ate on that day the second bun.

On the third day, being desirous to know something of the world outside the hogshead, she applied her eye to the bunghole, but could discern nothing save sky and drifting clouds. She ate the third bun, and resigned herself to her situation.

On the fourth day she became restless, and she put out her forefinger through the bunghole to ascertain the direction of the wind. When she withdrew her finger she put it to her lips and tasted salt. Then she knew that the wind blew over the sea, and was freshening, so that the spray came on her finger. She ate the fourth bun.

During the night a storm arose, and the barrel tossed and pitched distressingly. Cleomene had much ado by shifting her position to maintain the balance of the cask and prevent it from turning over, in which case the water would have rushed in at the bunghole, and she would have been drowned. Next day was spent in great discomfort, and she nibbled fitfully at the fifth bun.

Then the waves abated. Cleomene looked sadly at her last bun. She put her finger through the bunghole, and when she withdrew it discovered that a sulphur butterfly had alighted on the tip. By this

she knew that she was nearing land. Now her great desire was to get ashore. In her distress she broke into words :—

> " Because at the elves I did fleer and mock,
> Upon the ocean condemned to rock—— '

She had hardly uttered these words before a grating sensation thrilled through her body, and in a moment the cask was stranded.

But how was she to escape? With the ebb she had been cast ashore; with the next tide she would be carried out to sea again.

While thus musing she heard voices.

The natives of the country had seen the drifting hogshead; and, anticipating that it contained spirits and would afford them much pleasure, they rushed down to the beach to secure the prize.

They began to roll it up the sands, a proceeding that caused the queen indescribable discomfort. She cried out. This greatly astonished the natives, and with their axes they fell on the cask and broke the staves.

Thereupon the lovely Cleomene issued from the broken barrel and stood before them. She shook her ruffled garments, brushed her golden hair behind her ears, and entreated the natives to conduct her to their king.

They obeyed, but the king was at the moment engaged in counting out his money, and he said,

without looking up from the table, "Put her in the garden and bid her weed the paths."

The king had a head gardener, who was a most accomplished man. His mind was so superior to his duties that he left everything to be done by his subordinates, and spent his time in talking, mostly about his own accomplishments.

Cleomene was committed to this man, who set her to weed the beds and paths.

By working hard, her deficiency in conversational powers passed unnoticed. And, indeed, having no household to manage, she had at this period nothing about which she could talk.

The king forgot all about Cleomene, and the head gardener was only too delighted to retain her in the palace garden throughout the winter, so diligent a worker did she prove. She therefore remained in her situation till it was time, in spring, to sow the seeds. The head gardener one day, when it was suitable for sowing annuals, committed the task to Cleomene, whilst he went to converse with people who were passing on the highway. She sowed diligently and unflaggingly all day, and in every flower-bed, as she had been given one seed-packet, she sowed everywhere the selfsame seeds, which happened to be the Ten-Week Stock. She had not been told that variety is pleasing.

Nothing occurred deserving of mention till the seeds came up, but then a gentle surprise was

depicted in the face of the king. He sent for the head gardener, and expressed to him his astonishment at seeing everywhere throughout his flower-garden only plants of the same character. The head gardener replied that, as all babies are alike at first, so is it with all seedling plants—differentiation takes place later.

When, however, all the plants began to blow, and in every flower-bed, in the sunk-garden, in the wall-garden, in the herbaceous border, in the sub-tropical-garden, everywhere nothing bloomed but Ten-Week Stock, then the wrath of the king blazed forth, and he sent for the head gardener, who at once laid the entire blame on Cleomene.

"The sun cannot shine everywhere," said he; "neither can my eyes be in all parts at once. I am not to blame."

"An example must be made," said the king. "We will have that young woman branded on the nose with 'T.W.S.,' to let it be known everywhere and by all that she sowed no other seed than Ten-Week Stock."

Cleomene was introduced into the torture-chamber. A brazier stood there, full of glowing charcoal, in which was an iron stamp wherewith she was to be indelibly marked.

"Young woman," said the king, "hold out your nose, and hold it steady, or the brand-letters will be scattered over your face."

Then Cleomene threw herself sobbing on the floor, and cried:—

> "Because at the elves I did fleer and mock,
> Upon the ocean condemned to rock,
> To be branded for sowing but Ten-Week Stock——"

She had hardly uttered the line before the king repented of his cruel purpose, and said, "The girl is not bad-looking; she has a handsome nose; it would be a pity to spoil it. She shall be given another chance. Let her redeem her character in the kitchen."

Accordingly Cleomene was released, and the executioner, with a sigh, laid aside his implement of torture and extinguished the charcoal.

Cleomene now found herself in quite a different sphere. She had to prepare the meals for the royal party—something nice for breakfast, a simple, wholesome, not too substantial lunch, and to exert all her powers on dinner for the evening—*pièces de résistance* and *hors d'œuvres*. There was a head cook on the establishment, who took to herself all the encomiums lavished on dainty cookery, and laid on the underlings all the blame for burnt puddings, heavy pastry, and underdone or overdone fish and meat. She was not a person of rude health, and usually succumbed to exhaustion in the afternoons, and did not reappear till late the next morning.

Cleomene did her best. She was desirous to

please and to show the king that she was grateful for having been spared the ignominy of a branded nose.

She considered what would be a suitable dish for dinner, as the king had invited a neighbouring potentate to visit him, as also the President of a great Republic; she thought that cottage-pie was not only simple and easy of construction, it was likewise nutritious, and above all, economical, for in it she used up scraps of cold meat, minced, with pepper and onion, and, over all, potatoes nicely browned.

As there was to be a large dinner-party of twenty personages, she first made a small cottage-pie, and ate of that as much as she could, as a standard unit, and then multiplied by twenty the amount consumed by herself, and made cottage-pie commensurate with this requirement. But, as there was no dish large enough, she divided the amount by three, and made three pies, one containing six portions only for the president, but one containing seven for each of the sovereigns. This, it must be allowed, showed an amount of intelligence and calculation hardly to be anticipated in one of Cleomene's calibre.

As she had found, after eating her portion of cottage-pie, that she had no appetite for anything further, Cleomene calculated that it would be the same at the royal board, and so provided nothing more.

The dinner-party resulted in a fracas between the potentates, royal and republican, and the king who was entertaining them. They insisted that he had invited them to his table only to insult them, and they retired in dudgeon and with threats of invasion.

The king, in fury, summoned his Cabinet to consult what was to be done, and the Cabinet agreed that the cook had been guilty of high treason, and must lose her head. The head cook—shortly to become a headless cook—was conducted into the royal presence heavily ironed. She maintained her serenity, buoyed up by conscious rectitude. She declared that she had not been in the kitchen when the cottage-pies were made. On principle she never entered the kitchen when dinner was being prepared, lest she should injure her complexion at the range. The dinner in question was due to the underling; if his Majesty thrust the scum of his country into the kitchen, what else could be expected?

The king saw the force of this self-exculpation, and ordered the chains to be knocked off the cook's hands and feet, and Cleomene was sent for.

It was in vain for her to protest that what she had done was her best, and done with desire to please. The king in council condemned her to die by the axe. She was immediately conveyed to execution. The headsman sharpened the instrument

of death on a whetstone, and the block was produced and placed in the courtyard.

Cleomene was conducted to the spot where she was to die.

The sight of the scaffold draped in sable, of the masked executioner, overcame her, and with a bitter cry, as she wrung her hands, she exclaimed :—

> "Because at the elves I did fleer and mock,
> Upon the ocean condemned to rock,
> To be branded for sowing but Ten-Week Stock,
> And for cottage-pie doomed to the fatal block——"

Hardly were the words uttered before she saw an anchor that had caught in the executioner's block, and turned it over. It was attached to a rope that hung down from the clouds. Instantly Cleomene caught the rope and planted herself on the anchor. Next moment she was drawn up, over the heads of the crowd, above the roof of the palace. She looked down on the city ; all grew small and ever smaller under her, and she became alarmed, when, looking up, she saw a cloud, in shape like a ship, from which the rope depended to which was attached the anchor that was occupied by her. She heard the clank of a windlass, and saw pale faces looking over the bulwarks of the cloud-ship. Presently she was drawn up the white side of the vessel, and in another moment was on deck.

She now discovered that she was actually in a

cloud-ship, that navigated the upper firmament. It had sails that caught the wind and carried it forward. It was manned by spiritual beings, vaporous and transparent, with wan faces, like the moon by daylight. One mysterious being approached her, and said, "I constitute thee stewardess." Cleomene discovered that so long as the wind blew and the vessel made headway, the crew had no need for her assistance; but in a dead calm, when the cloud-ship was motionless, they suffered poignantly, and the stewardess was much in request.

In the aërial bark Cleomene voyaged day and night. Sometimes the vessel passed more swiftly through the sky than at other times. She enjoyed the freshness of the air, and the repose. When thunder and tempest menaced, the cloud-ship was lightened, and soared high above the region of meteorological disturbance. When the storm was over, it descended again. Life on board was uneventful. The spirit-mariners never spoke, and their faces expressed no emotion or interest. The only variety in her life on board was produced when the spirit bark skimmed past volcanoes in active eruption, when sometimes masses of pumice and scoria were thrown into the boat. These masses materially incommoded the vessel and impeded its motion. She sank in the atmospheric ocean. But always, when a mariner saw that this was the case, he went to the spot where lay the erupted matter, and threw it over-

board. When such a mass fell on earth it was called a meteoric stone. Directly the ship was lightened it rose in the air with renewed buoyancy. This was disappointing to Cleomene, who was pleased to sail near the world, to see its mountains and pastures, rivers and towns.

When the ship sailed high, then the world below looked like a map, and that unpleasantly reminded Cleomene of the school-room. As the sailors never spoke, the dulness became at last intolerable, and Cleomene grew most desirous to be on earth again.

Such had been her life for a month and a day, when in sailing over Stromboli she managed to secure some lava projected from the crater, and to secrete it under her skirts.

As now the vessel swam low, the captain became uneasy, and sent the sailors to search the vessel; but they found nothing. As they passed Etna a great mass of rock was flung out of the volcano, and fell on the ship. Again with dexterity Cleomene rolled it under her, and sat upon it. The ship now sank very low.

The ghostly mariners moved about uneasily, and examined the hold to see if any gross air had got into it. One went over the side to explore the bottom and learn if any swallows—air barnacles—had attached themselves to the keel. But all at once a sailor, the man at the wheel, detected a piece of the stone projecting from under the skirts of

Cleomene. Immediately the captain and crew were summoned, and they stood about her with indignation flashing in their faces like summer lightning in clouds. They were very angry, as well as alarmed, for if the vessel ran against a mountain it was likely to go to pieces. They moved their arms threateningly, and she feared they would throw her overboard. In her alarm she exclaimed :—

> "Because at the elves I did fleer and mock,
> Upon the ocean condemned to rock,
> To be branded for sowing but Ten-Week Stock,
> And for cottage-pie doomed to the fatal block,
> I weighted the ship with erupted rock——"

Instantly the cloud-vessel ran on breakers and went to pieces. The crew were visible drifting about as bits of fleecy vapour, some clinging to pines, some striving to soar; but Cleomene breathed happily to find her feet once more on substantial soil.

The country in which she found herself was strange to her eyes. The trees were of a dull green, and with drooping but not deciduous foliage. There was no song in the birds, no fragrance in the flowers.

After descending the hill on which she had landed, Cleomene came on a plain with open grassy tracts studded with tree-clumps. Here she discerned a habitation, and directed her steps towards it.

A man with a shaggy beard and unkempt head of

hair, a coloured shirt open at the throat, and hands in his pockets, lounged at the door.

He eyed her as she approached, without removing the hat from his head, the pipe from his lips, or his hands from his pockets, and said, "Wull, who are you, this time o' day?"

"I am Cleomene, Queen of Coralia," answered she. "I shall be obliged if you will give me something to eat and drink."

"Queen, are you?"

"Yes, I am a Queen."

"Queens be blowed!" observed the Vulgar Man.

"That," responded Cleomene, "is what I am particularly averse to. I have, in fact, been blown about a great deal too much. Now I am on solid soil I want substantial food. Aloft I had a vaporous diet, of which it took a great deal to allay the appetite, and yet there always remained a void."

"Have a drink?" said the Vulgar Man. "What's your tipple?"

"Milk, if you please."

"Humph!" said the Vulgar Man. "If you get anything from me you must pay for it——"

"I have no money."

"Then you must work for it. I'll give you junks of salt pork and lots of whisky. You shall look after my nursery of kangaroos. I am short of a governess. Give 'em air and exercise, and keep 'em clean."

So Queen Cleomene passed into the service of the Vulgar Man, whose talk was Slang.

The first day he said to her, "If you lose or injure one of my kangaroos, I 'll settle your hash."

"I have not had any hash since I was in Coralia," said the queen. "There I turned up my nose at it."

Cleomene found that the charge of the kangaroos was laborious. These beasts jumped prodigiously, and she had to keep on the run incessantly to retain them in a flock. She was so exhausted with each day's work that she felt the life was unendurable.

Then Cleomene recollected having seen performing fleas. These insects had been entirely cured of their propensity for leaping, so the exhibitor had asserted, by enclosing them in a box where, when they leaped, they struck their heads against the cover. In the course of two or three days the fleas were entirely broken of their habit of jumping.

The Vulgar Man had a drinking-bar and a dancing-saloon near his house, but, as there were no men in the neighbourhood to drink, and no women within a hundred miles to dance, neither was frequented. Into this bar and dancing-saloon Cleomene introduced the thirty kangaroos entrusted to her care, and, sitting in the bar with her knitting, allowed the kangaroos full liberty to leap and knock their heads against the ceiling.

By evening all the flock was completely prostrated. The beasts had jumped and had banged their skulls till all laboured under concussion of the brain, and lay their length on the floor. Cleomene attempted to rouse them, but they were senseless, and breathing in a stertorous manner that alarmed her. In a panic she ran from the saloon; she feared the vengeance of the Vulgar Man, and she did not cease running till she reached the seashore. There she cast herself on the sand and gasped:—

> "Because at the elves I did fleer and mock,
> Upon the ocean condemned to rock,
> To be branded for sowing but Ten-Week Stock,
> And for cottage-pie doomed to the fatal block,
> I weighted the ship with erupted rock,
> And settled the hash of my kangaroo flock——"

Instantly she was aware of a boatload of English sailors hard by. She entreated them to save her from the Vulgar Man, and they assented with enthusiasm. They rowed her to their ship, and presented her to their commanding officer, Commodore Sir Samson Furzeby, of the *Furious*.

Sir Samson asked Cleomene what she desired.

She replied, to work her passage.

To this he assented, and told her that her duty would be that of housemaid to the ship—to dust the bunkers, and brush down cobwebs from the yardarms—and that the ship was a man-of-war, and an ironclad.

Cleomene performed her duties with alacrity, and became a general favourite. In the evenings she told the sailors yarns, which were strictly true, for they concerned her adventures. She was frequently interrupted in her narrative by the recommendation to "tell that to the Horse Marines," and this she readily undertook to do on the earliest available occasion, when she made acquaintance with that gallant body of men.

Cleomene might have remained long on board the *Furious* but for an untoward accident.

One morning, while dusting the cabin in which were kept the wines of the mess, with her skirts she swept down an entire dozen of sparkling hock belonging to the mess—and a pretty mess she made thereby.

The captain overheard the crash of bottles, and shouted from his crib to know what was up. Cleomene replied that the sparkling hock had been very much up, but was so no longer.

Sir Samson piped all hands to the side of his bunk, and held a court on Cleomene, and sentenced her to be keel-hauled.

Keel-hauling is a frightful punishment in daily employment in the British navy. It consists in dragging a person down one side of a vessel by a rope under the keel and up the other side. When Cleomene heard her sentence she was paralysed with terror, and sobbed forth :—

"Because at the elves I did fleer and mock,
Upon the ocean condemned to rock,
To be branded for sowing but Ten-Week Stock,
And for cottage-pie doomed to the fatal block,
I weighted the ship with erupted rock,
And settled the hash of my kangaroo flock,
And knocked down a dozen of sparkling hock——"

Then the under-officers and all the crew prostrated themselves before the commodore, bit the dust, tore their garments, and implored some lenity. Sir Samson relaxed, and commuted the sentence to being put ashore on a desert island.

As a desert island was immediately sighted on the larboard side, the boat was lowered, and, amidst the tears of the men of the fo'castle, Cleomene was conducted to the islet, and was there left. As soon as the man-of-war had disappeared in the offing, Cleomene looked about her. The island was volcanic, and consisted of a cone. To her surprise, she saw a post with a board nailed to it near the landing-place. She read:—

"TAKE NOTICE.

"This island is inhabited by the Gryojock, a quadruped and a mammal, in shape like a deer, but with a human appearance in the head, with projecting ears. Its favourite diet is human flesh. The legs on the right side before and behind are half the length of those on the left side. This is a wise provision of Nature, adapted to the habitat of the animal. It enables it to ascend and descend the conical hills of volcanic islands such as it frequents.

Voyagers are specially requested to observe the habits of this animal. One pound reward to any such as can describe the colour of its eyes."

Cleomene had hardly read this before she heard a trumpeting sound, and, looking up, saw the Gyrojock on the apex of the cone, snuffing the breezes. It had discovered her, and began in rotary fashion to descend the mountain.

Had there been a level spot on the island, Cleomene would have been safe, as there the monster could not stand. Her only chance was to ascend the cone spirally in an opposite direction to that taken by the Gyrojock as it descended, and to manage to be on the one side of the mountain when it was on the other. This she did with great exertion, and when she reached the summit there it was at the bottom, snuffing and trumpeting. But the monster soon perceived her, and recommenced its rotary ascent, and she her rotary descent.

Thus for some time she baffled the creature. But this could not last for ever. She was exhausted, and sobbed forth :—

"Because at the elves I did fleer and mock,
Upon the ocean condemned to rock,
To be branded for sowing but Ten-Week Stock,
And for cottage-pie doomed to the fatal block,
I weighted the ship with erupted rock,
And settled the hash of my kangaroo flock,
And knocked down a dozen of sparkling hock,
And circumvented the Gyrojock."

She had hardly uttered the words, before the elf-mother appeared before her, smiling, and said: "'Circumvented the Gyrojock'! Fine, prodigiously fine! That is true poetry, and warms the heart. It is concise and epigrammatic. I would rather have written that line than have composed Thomson's *Seasons*, Falconer's *Shipwreck*, Browning's *The Ring and the Book*, or Sir Matthew Arnold's *Light of Asia*. I put an end to all your troubles."

The elf vanished, and Cleomene found herself where she had been before she began her series of adventures. The Revolution was at an end. The Provisional Government had provided for the working-classes only tinned meats, which they abhorred. The Committee of Public Safety had laid its hands on the funds, invested them abroad, and had followed them to see that they were secure.

The queen was received with enthusiasm. Cleomene was greatly altered. Her conversation was no longer confined to domestic matters. She had been in various situations, as gardener, cook, stewardess, nursery governess (to kangaroos), housemaid (on board a man-of-war), and she had come to understand that in such situations there was much that was trying and called for forbearance. Formerly she had been censorious with her servants; she was this no more.

Cabinet Councils were now looked forward to with eagerness, merely for the sake of hearing the queen

tell yarns; and the speech from the throne was devoured with avidity. And so, instead of telling her adventures to the Horse Marines, Cleomene retailed them to her kingdom, and kept it thenceforth in the best of humours, and entirely loyal to the throne, which, as all the subjects found, was full of sympathy with everyone who was in trouble.

"I hope, your Majesty," said Mr. Jeremiah Toope, "that you have not learned *anything* from the story of Cleomene, that it has left your mind as blank after hearing it as it was before. That, I take it, is what we who seek to amuse should study, whether we attempt it in literature, or on the stage."

The king looked at the queen.

At a sign from him, whilst the story of Cleomene was in course, some of the pixy attendants had removed the skin of the hedgehog and had concealed it.

Now the queen's eyes wandered in quest of it. There is a pleasing pain in self-abandonment to grief, even over a hedgehog, and the queen sought occasion for more tears.

Meanwhile, with eyes full of entreaty, the fairy Noyalen was watching her father. He saw it, and nodded assent. At once she tripped up to the schoolmaster, and presented to him another spray, on which was a tiny purple berry.

He readily took it, and no sooner was it between

his lips than it was as though a stopper had been taken out of one of his ears. He heard more distinctly than it had ever been possible with him before. He heard the rushing of a distant moorland river as it plunged over boulders; he heard the twitter of a night bird in a marsh, and the whisper of the wind among the fern. He was so delighted with the novel sensation that he would have listened in silence for an hour, had not a sign from the king reminded him that he was there to tell stories; so hastily collecting his thoughts, he began the fifth tale.

THE ASH-MAID

V.

THE STORY OF THE ASH-MAID

THERE lived, in the springtime of the world, two knights that loved each other very dearly. They had been friends as children, and were companions-in-arms when men. Now it so fell out that both married and lived at some distance from each other in their castles, and thenceforth saw but little of each other. But for all that there was no abatement in the love each bore to the other.

And it came to pass that the one had by his wife two little children, born in one birth, and both were boys. Then Sir Eglamour, for that was his name, thanked Almighty God for so great a gift; and summoned to him a messenger and bade him go to his good friend Sir Triamour, and invite him to come and be godfather to his children.

The messenger hasted and went on his journey, and he arrived at the castle of Sir Triamour when he sat at meat in his hall, with his lady and all his retainers. Then he bent his knee and greeted the knight, and told him all his errand.

The knight, Sir Triamour, was pleased, and gave

the messenger a palfrey as present for his good tidings. Now when the lady heard that her husband's great friend's wife was mother of twins, she laughed, and said, "My cat has more at a litter than that. It were well that one of these pups should be drowned."

When she spoke thus, the messenger was sore ashamed, and Sir Triamour waxed wroth and rebuked his wife; but she spoke further rude and unmannerly words.

Sir Triamour departed for his friend's house, and a sorrowful man was he, lest the messenger should tell his friend the ugly words let drop by his wife. But whether Sir Eglamour heard thereof or not we cannot tell, for he gave no token of displeasure to his friend, but received him with open arms, and with joy of heart did welcome him. Likewise did his sweet lady salute Sir Triamour with gracious words, and showed him with pride and pleasure the two lovely, innocent babes she had brought into the world.

Now it came to pass that after a year had gone the wife of Sir Triamour also bare children, and became the mother of twin daughters. Then she thought of what she had said, and how everyone would heap scorn on her, for that she who had mocked Sir Eglamour's lady was come into the same plight. It was so, that her lord and master was absent from home at the time.

Then she bade a nurse-girl carry away one of the babes and dispose of it so that she should see it no more.

The good girl said to the lady, "Give to me the little babe, and you shall not hear of it again."

So the lady gave a beautiful mantle lined with miniver, in which the babe was to be wrapped, and she took a ring of gold and put it on the arm of the child, attached thereto by a piece of silk lace.

Now at night the maid stole out of the castle by a secret way, carrying the infant in her arms, and she traversed a wild heath. The season was winter, and the night was dark and windy. The poor babe sobbed in the maiden's arms, and would not be comforted.

At length the maid reached a forest, where there was shelter from the icy blast, and took a road that ran through the forest, and she came at length to a convent; but all therein were wrapped in sleep, and there shone but one light from the windows, and that was from the church.

Then the maiden stayed her steps, and she saw growing by the church door an old ash tree that was hollow. She took the babe, wrapped it well in the fur cloak, and laid it in the hollow of the trunk of the ash, and then fled away to return to her mistress.

When the day began to dawn, then the porter of the abbey arose, rang the bells, lighted the tapers,

laid forth the books, and then undid the church door. Now only did he perceive some fur in the ash tree, and going to examine it more closely found the babe wrapped in it. He at once took it to his home and delivered it to his daughter, and bade her warm and feed it.

She gladly accepted the charge, she unwrapped the child and laid it to sleep.

Now when the abbess and nuns had finished the service in the church, then the porter went to the abbess and told her what he had found, and that he believed the little babe came of noble family, because of the gold ring bound round its arm and the mantle of miniver in which it was wrapped.

Then the abbess bade that the little maiden should be baptised, and because it was found in an ash tree, therefore the name given was *Freyne*, which in the British language signifies an ash.

> This Freyne throve from year to year,
> The abbess's niece men thought she were.
> In all England there was none,
> A fairer maiden than she was one.

Now when she was grown, and well instructed, then the abbess asked her if it was her good will to become a nun in the convent. But Freyne told her that, though she had been happy in her love and in the peaceful life of the cloister, yet she had no desire to become a nun. The abbess told Freyne all about how she was found in an ash tree, and that

a girl without friends and relatives would have a hard time of it in the world. She gave Freyne the mantle of miniver and the gold ring that were found with her, and she said that she would put her in service into some good house where she might earn her daily bread.

Now it so came to pass that she was placed as a servant in the castle of a good knight who was young and lived with his mother, a discreet lady, a widow, and she was the widow of Sir Eglamour. The one of her twin sons tarried at home and kept the castle, but his brother was with the king and served him.

It was so, that the fair Freyne attended on the lady, and did good service, and was ever gentle, and cheerful, and willing.

Now the maid Freyne had not served long in the house before the eyes of the young knight rested on her, and he was smitten with great love; likewise did she think that there never could be a more gentle and courteous man than was he. His name was Guroun. But inasmuch as she was but a poor serving-maid, he strove to turn his mind from her; and she, in that she was one whose parentage was unknown, also knew that love for her young master would give her a sore heart and bring her no happiness.

Many a night she wept and prayed and wished she were back in the convent, and yet when day

came and she saw the gallant knight, she felt as if she could never be happy away from the house where he dwelt.

Now the mother of the young knight saw how his mind was leaning towards Freyne, and she knew, as a wise and prudent woman, that this must not be allowed to proceed further.

Therefore she urged her son greatly to marry; and she bade him ride to the castle of his father's great friend, Sir Triamour, for he, said she, hath a fair daughter who is wonderfully beautiful, so all men aver, and she is the heiress to his broad lands. And the young knight, though he had no wish to marry anyone save Freyne, yet on his mother's persuasion, and moved by his own sense of what was fitting, mounted his horse and with a great retinue went to visit Sir Triamour. And there he saw his daughter, who was named Hazel, and the reason why she was called Hazel was this: after that her twin sister had been taken away, the babe could in no way be comforted; it sobbed and refused to be fed.

It fell out that as the maiden returned from disposing of the one daughter at the convent gates, she walked till the dawn broke; and as she went along she passed a hazel bush on which were catkins, although the time of year was early. And she plucked a twig hung with catkins, and she came along swinging the pendent blossoms.

And when she arrived at the castle, her mistress

was in tears and despair because of the weeping of the babe. Then the maiden took the branch of catkins and dangled them before the eyes of the child, and drew them lightly to and fro over the babe's face, and it laughed and was happy. So when the child was christened they named her Hazel. She was tall and fair and graceful, and withal of a sweet disposition, but ever with a slight shade of sadness in her face.

Verily, the young knight, the son of Sir Eglamour, would never have cared to ask for her in marriage, had he not thought that he saw in her a something that reminded him of his dear Freyne, the ash-maid.

Before he had been there many days he asked to be given Hazel to wife, and the marriage was to take place within a month at his own and not at the bride's house, and when his dear twin brother could be summoned from the court of the king.

Now when Freyne heard that her lord was to be wedded to another lord's daughter, then was her heart nigh breaking.

She wept and grew white and wan, moreover she resolved to return to the convent, and there spend the rest of her days as a holy nun.

She told her intent to her mistress, but the lady said she could in no case spare her till the marriage was over. After that she might go. Very sadly, and against her will, Freyne tarried in the castle. And all men might see that the young knight was

likewise ill at ease; that he could not be content to be married to the fair Hazel, but that his heart hung on the fair Ash. His mother was even alarmed lest now, at the last moment, he should break away from the maid to whom he was promised and follow his own inclination.

At length the wedding party arrived, and the bishop came likewise to bless the marriage.

Now it was the duty of Freyne to attend to the chambers, and when she came to do the room for the bride she thought that the bed was not warm enough, and had not on a sufficiently handsome coverlet. So she hasted and fetched her own mantle of miniver and laid that over the bed.

Next it must be told how that Sir Triamour had been with his lady and daughter to the king's court, and there had been jousting and dancing and much merry-making there, and at that time the twin brother of Sir Guroun was also there; and he had worn catkins to his crest and a sprig of hazel painted on his shield in the tournament, and had behaved himself right valiantly, and all knights had been unhorsed before him, whatever were their crests. Lions, leopards, eagles, drakes, had all gone down before the hazel-bough hung with catkins.

And the reason why Sir Ferimond, as the twin brother of Sir Guroun was called, bore the catkins in his crest and on his shield was that he thought Hazel was the fairest thing his eyes had ever rested on.

And although he came to very little speech with her, yet did his heart cleave to her.

Right sorrowful was he when the tidings reached him that his brother was to be espoused to the Hazel Maid. Very dear though Guroun was to him, he could ill bear that he should carry away the Hazel, on whom his heart was set. Nevertheless he returned home when his mother and brother summoned him; but his countenance was sad.

Moreover, when Hazel beheld him, she changed hue, and the tears came into her eyes, for she knew that she loved Sir Ferimond, whereas she only liked his brother, Sir Guroun.

Great was the banqueting and loud was the mirth at the table; only was the bride cast down and the bridegroom and his brother were discouraged.

Now when the lady mother of the fair Hazel took her daughter to the chamber where she was to put on her most beautiful white garments in which to go to the church to be married, then it was so that she spied a splendid mantle all furred with miniver laid over the bed.

And thereat she uttered a loud cry, for she knew that it was the very cloak in which the twin sister of Hazel had been carried forth by the maid.

She cried out for the chamberlain, and she asked him whence he had gotten this mantle. But he answered that he knew not whence it came, it was none of his providing.

Then came in the handmaid, Freyne, and the lady spoke to her, and asked whose mantle that was. Thereupon the maiden fair replied :—

> "It is mine without leasing;
> I had it together with this ring."

And she told how that she was found at the abbey door, wrapped in miniver, and with the ring on her arm.

> Then the lady was astonished sore.
> "Fair child! my daughter! I thee bore!"
> She swooned, and was well-nigh dead,
> And lay sick, weeping on the bed.

Then she sent for her husband, and told him all; how that she had been the mother of two daughters, and how, because she feared to be mocked, she had sent one away, and that with the child she sent the mantle and the ring, whereby it might be known again.

Now the bishop stood by the altar in the church, and the tapers were alight, and he was ready with his ministers to bless the spousal.

But strange was the way in which he was kept waiting, and wondrous was the noise of shouting and merriment that came to his ears from without.

But presently, still more to his wonder, there entered two happy couples, who desired him to bless them and unite them in marriage; and more wondrous still, Sir Guroun did not desire him to give in marriage to him the Hazel, as was intended, but

instead, the Ash; whereas his twin brother, Sir Ferimond, took the Hazel.

Yet, great though was his wonder, the bishop could not there, in the church and at the altar, ask why this change was; he had to content himself with asking each over twice whether he, Guroun, took the Ash, and whether he, Ferimond, took the Hazel. And as neither had any doubt at all, neither had the maidens any hesitation in saying to which knight she consigned herself, the bishop pronounced the benediction which was to make each couple happy for ever and a day.

By this time the queen had forgotten the hedgehog; she no longer looked for its skin. She had raised herself to a sitting posture, and had allowed her husband to wipe the tears from her cheeks. She looked at the sweet princess and made a sign to her. This was encouraging, for it showed that she was able to think of something other than her sorrows and of someone else beside herself, and that she even entertained a sense of gratitude instead of having all her emotions concentrated on the loss of her pet. The king himself was pleased.

Then Noyalen timidly but smilingly approached Mr. Jeremiah, and this time opened her little palm, that was like a delicate rose-coloured sea-shell, and in the midst was one little purple berry like a dark pearl.

Mr. Jeremiah stooped and took up the berry with his lips, and at the same time kissed the little hand, that was at once hastily withdrawn, and a lively crimson blush came over the fairy's face.

Then said Mr. Toope, "I will tell you the story now of 'Patient Helen'; and this shall be my sixth."

"We are anxious to hear it," said the king.

Thereupon the schoolmaster was aware that he saw with one eye very differently from what he did before; and above all he saw how lovely Noyalen was. In very truth, as he told the next story he was unable to take this clear-seeing eye off her.

PATIENT HELEN

VI.

PATIENT HELEN

THERE lived once upon a time in Constantinople a king called Anthony, and he had a beautiful daughter called Helen. She was asked in marriage by the king of the Huns, and Anthony gave his consent, for he wished to be on good terms with the Huns.

But the Hun king was hideously ugly. His ears grew where are the eyes of most people, and his eyes were in the place where your and my ears grow.

Helen could not bear the thought of being married to this dreadful man, so she ran away from home and went on board a merchant vessel. She put on her dress of cloth of gold embroidered with silken flowers. But above this she cast a thick old mantle of common stuff, patched about with many pieces of cloth very unlike the original material.

Now as the ship went sailing down the Bosphorus, all the bells in all the churches rang of their own accord.

The ship had not got out of sight of land before it was attacked by a pirate vessel, and the pirates killed

the merchant and all the crew, and carried off all the merchandise; but because Helen was in a poor beggar's dress they thought nothing of her, and they left her on the ship, and cut a hole in the ship's bottom to sink the vessel and drown Helen in it.

The pirates sailed away laden with plunder.

Then Helen saw that the ship she was on was filling with water and began to sink. So she managed to loosen one plank, and when the ship sank she floated on the sea, seated on this one plank. She spread her veil, and the wind blew, filled the veil, and wafted her far, far away, and cast her on the shore of Britain. Then she stepped on land, and because she was very hungry and weary, she went into an orchard, in which was a crystal fountain. And she sat by the fountain and ate the apples and drank the water.

It so fell out that the old king of England was dead, and the realm was in the hands of his wife the queen-mother and her young son, Constant. Now Helen threw off her cloak of patches, and her golden gown was visible underneath, but it was sadly marred with seaweed; and she was picking the seaweed off when the young King Constant came into the orchard. He at once stopped to speak to her, and he saw how white and worn she seemed. Then he said, "You have a very grand dress, but it is all covered with seaweed."

She said: "I was in a merchant ship, and pirates

came and plundered the vessel and killed the crew, and because they thought I was only a beggar, they left me behind, and bored a hole in the ship to sink her. But I escaped on a plank."

Then the king sent his chamberlain for food and wine, but Helen was so faint that she could scarce eat. So he sopped the bread and cake in the wine and put it into her mouth.

And when she was better, then the king conjured Helen to tell him who she was. And she told him all.

Then King Constant determined that he would marry the maiden he had found in the apple orchard.

His mother when she heard this was very angry, and she said, "Why are you so mad as to take such a girl, who comes no one knows whence, out of the sea, covered with weeds, and who, if she have a gold gown, most assuredly stole it?"

But the young king was so much in love with the beautiful Helen that he would not listen to his mother. He made a sumptuous wedding feast, and his mother pretended to be glad at heart, but she was scheming evil all the while.

Now it fell out that soon after the wedding the King Constant went with a great army to fight against the Saracens. Before he departed he had three royal seals made, and he kept one for himself, he gave one to Helen, and the third to the Earl of Gloucester, whom he made viceroy of England whilst

he was away. Then he departed, and the separation was sad between him and his dear Helen.

Helen remained mostly in London, where was the earl. The queen-mother lived at Dover, and she came sometimes to see her daughter-in-law. She spoke to her lovingly, and quite deceived Helen, making her think that she was much attached to her. But all the while this wicked woman was considering how she might destroy her.

Now it happened one day that Queen Helen felt very sleepy whilst her mother-in-law was with her, and the queen-mother said to her, "Lay your head on my lap and sleep." She did so.

Whilst Helen was asleep, the queen-mother felt in the purse that was hung at Helen's belt, and found the seal, and hid it away. Then, after Helen awoke, she hurried to Dover and sent for a goldsmith, and bade him make her an exact copy of the signet.

When he brought it, then she took a knife, stabbed him to the heart, and threw him out of the window into the sea. She next rode to London, and she contrived unperceived to restore the seal of the king to the purse of Helen.

Not long after that, Queen Helen became the mother of two beautiful boys, twins, beautiful as the day.

The earl thought he must write and tell the king, so he wrote a letter and said in it how beautiful the two baby boys were, and he sealed it with

the royal signet and sent the letter off by a messenger.

Now when the messenger came to Dover and was waiting for the vessel to take him across the straits, the servants of the queen-mother met him, and as they were instructed by their mistress, they asked him to come and speak with her. He agreed and went to her house. She bade a feast be made for him, and she spiced his wine with something that would make him sleep. So he ate and drank, and then felt drowsy, and went to sleep with his head on the table.

When the queen-mother saw this, she took away the letter that he carried. She opened it and read what the Earl of Gloucester had written. Then she called her scribe, and made him write instead that the queen had given birth to two hideous monsters, with the heads of black dogs, with the wings of bats, and with web-feet, a clear evidence that she was a witch. This was signed in imitation of the writing of the Earl of Gloucester, and sealed with the imitation of the king's signet.

When the messenger awoke, he was rather ashamed at having slept; he started up and hurried to the ship, and he had no idea as to what had been done while he was sleeping.

When the king got this letter he was greatly surprised and concerned. He thought about it, and he felt quite sure that there was some mistake.

So he wrote a letter to the Earl of Gloucester to say that every care and kindness should be shown to his dear Helen and to the two babes, and that he would inquire into the matter when he returned.

Now by her orders the servants of the queen-mother were on the watch for the return of the messenger, and when he reached Dover they invited him to sup at the house of their lady, whilst his horses were being got ready. He agreed, and was well entertained, and again the queen-mother spiced his cup so that he fell asleep.

Whilst he slumbered she took the letter from him, opened it, and read what the king had written. Then she called her scribe and made him write that the Queen Helen and her two babes were forthwith to be burnt alive, and that some token was to be retained to show that the earl had faithfully fulfilled what he was required to do. Then she sealed up the letter and put it in place of the other among the despatches of the messenger.

No sooner had the Earl of Gloucester received and read this letter than he was out of countenance, and did not know what to do. He consulted his wife, and she bade him do nothing, but wait and send another letter to the king.

Now it fell out with this second letter as with the first. The queen-mother got it into her hands and altered its tenor. And it was the same with the return letter. When she had that, she read

that the king bade the earl do nothing ungentle, but be careful of the queen and babes till the king's return.

The queen-mother altered all that, and made her scribe write seven letters, all to the same effect, that the queen and the babes were forthwith to be burnt on a little isle in the midst of the river Thames.

She sent only one of these letters by the return messenger of the Earl of Gloucester. When he was gone, then she ran a knife into the heart of her scribe, lest he should betray what had been done, and threw his body out of the window into the sea.

The Earl of Gloucester was sore abashed when he got this second letter. He called together the councillors of the realm to decide what was to be done, and he showed them the two letters he had received. Whilst they were consulting, there arrived another messenger with a third letter, and the tenor was the same.

The Council could come to no decision, and resolved to meet again the next day. But when they assembled next day, there came a messenger with a fourth letter, and so it was every day up to seven. And in the last letter they were all threatened with death unless they complied at once with what the king commanded.

Then the Council said, "It were best to obey the

king and burn this woman, than that we should be all given up to be hanged."

The earl went home in great grief, and he showed the letter to the queen.

She was sore amazed, and could not understand why the great love of Constant was changed to hate. But being meek and patient, she said, "As the king wills so must it be. I grieve only for my pretty babes."

Now the Earl and Countess of Gloucester had a daughter, Mary, and she was warmly attached to the queen, and was quite heart-broken at the thought of what was to be done to her mistress. She said that when the queen was dead she knew she would die of sorrow also.

The earl was greatly grieved, but he could not see how he was to disobey the king's repeated orders. He said to Helen, "Fair lady, what can I take and present as a token that I obey my lord the king? How am I to show him that I have done what he commanded?"

Thereupon she replied, "This is my hand. On this hand he put the gold ring when he married me. You must cut it off."

The earl did not wish to do this, but he did not see how else he was to assure the king that he had obeyed faithfully, so next day he sent for the executioner, and he cut off Helen's left hand at the wrist. Then he took a piece of her golden garment in which

she had been washed ashore, and wrapped the hand therein.

Now when this had been done, his daughter Mary came weeping and entreating, and she said, "Burn me in place of my dear mistress, the queen; and I will make two dolls of rag, and carry them, and they will be thought to be the babes."

The queen would not for long consent to this, but because Mary was urgent, and because she desired to preserve her dear little twin babes, she at last yielded.

Then, forasmuch as it was known that the queen's hand was cut off, it was necessary that the left hand of the earl's daughter should be cut off also. And next day the good and faithful Mary, dressed in her mistress's robe, and carrying two rag dolls, was hurried to an island in the Thames, and was there burned to ashes. But the people, and the soldiers, and the executioner, all thought she was the queen, because she had but one hand.

Now it must be told that the earl hasted with Helen to the seaside, and put her in a little boat, with a barrel of wine and three loaves. He had drawn the ring from the finger of the queen's hand that was cut off and had put it on his daughter's hand that was also cut off. And he enclosed the hand of the queen, wrapped round in the gold brocade, in a common cover, and bound it to one of the babes, fast to its side.

Then the earl, weeping sore, thrust the boat out to sea, and commended it to the gentlest winds of heaven, and he returned home, and put his daughter's hand with the ring on it in a golden casket set with pearls and emeralds, and set it in his bedchamber.

Now it must be told how that the wind wafted the patient Helen, as she sat nursing her two babes, over the blue water towards the coast of Brittany. She could do little with the boat, for she had one hand only, and with that she attended to the twin babes.

The waves drove the boat up on the shore, and Helen stepped out, carrying her babes, and went into an oak wood, and found a rock, and under the shade of the rock she laid the children. They were fast asleep, so she returned to the boat for the little cask of wine and the three loaves. She was some time in bringing them, because she was not as yet accustomed to having one hand.

Now when she came back to the rock, both the children were gone. They had, in fact, been carried off by a lion and a bear.

The poor mother ran through the wood crying and calling, but all in vain. She saw no more traces of her innocent babes, and for some time she wished she were dead.

After a while, in her wanderings, she came to a town. When there she went to the house of a widow, and served her. She could not become a servant in a great house, nor with people who required much, for

she had one hand only. With that one hand, because there was an honest heart with good will behind, she did more, so the widow thought, than many a girl who had two hands.

After she had remained some years with the widow woman, this woman, her mistress, died, and Helen was constrained to go elsewhere. She took ship, and in the ship she sailed to Constantinople, and when she arrived there she was sore afraid that her father, King Anthony, would not forgive her for running away, and therefore she did not disclose who she was; and as she was very poor, she made her abode under the stairs that led up to the palace.

Every day the king came down, and she put forth her hand, and he dropped into it a penny, for he pitied greatly the woman who had but one hand.

Now it came to pass that his thoughts began to trouble him concerning his daughter, and he resolved to go about the world in a great fleet seeking her. Little did he think that he was really so near her, and that it was to her that he gave an alms every day. So King Anthony got a fair fleet of ships ready, and he sailed the sea, seeking everywhere for his lost daughter.

Now we must return and tell of what happened to the babes.

A lion and a bear had carried them off, and they ran with them through the forest.

There was a hermit lived in that forest, and he was

out picking sticks when he heard the beasts come by, and each carried a human babe. Then he shouted and rushed upon them, and the bear let go the child it was carrying and fled away. But the hermit picked up the babe and ran after the lion, pursuing his traces through the forest till he came to his lair. Then he went boldly in, and forasmuch as he was a good man, fearing God, the lion would not hurt him, and let him take up the other babe, and carry it away.

So the hermit took the twins to his house in the wood, and he christened them; one he called Lion, and the other Brice. And the children grew up with him, and he well instructed them in letters and in all godly knowledge. When he took the babes home he was much surprised to find that bound to one of them was a fair woman's hand, wrapped up in costly gold brocade. He put it by and cared for it, and he told the boys that he had no doubt this hand was the hand of their mother; he could not be certain, but he believed it was so. Thus the boys remained with him and grew up during several years, and learned to talk and to read, and all good things.

In course of time King Constant returned to England, and when he arrived in Dover the wicked queen-mother came to meet him, and with many tears told him that his wife was dead; she had been killed along with his beautiful boys by the Earl of Gloucester.

When the king heard this he was very wroth, and would ride at once to London and have the earl put to death. The queen-mother went with him. When the king arrived in London, and saw the earl, he drew his sword and would have cut him to pieces on the spot, but his knights went between, and they said, "This is not English custom, to condemn and kill a man unheard."

But the old queen-mother said, "Strike, my son, and do not spare."

Nevertheless, as Constant was a just man, and would not be above the laws, he asked the earl how it was that he had put his wife and children to death. Then the earl answered that he had done this by the king's express command, sent him in eight letters.

The king was very astonished to hear this, and he said that unless these letters were produced, and he were satisfied that they were his, he would condemn the earl to death. Then the Earl of Gloucester sent for the letters.

Now whilst they were being sought, there came a herald into Westminster Hall, where was the king, to say that there had arrived the fleet of Anthony, King of Constantinople, and that he desired to visit and salute the king. So Constant gave orders that he should be forthwith conducted into the hall.

Now when King Anthony arrived, he told King Constant that he was searching for his daughter, who

was named Helen, and was the most beautiful woman in the world, and as virtuous as she was beautiful. And straightway King Constant told him how a beautiful stranger in cloth of gold had arrived on a plank in Britain, and how he had married her, and how she had been traitorously done to death by the Earl of Gloucester, whom he was now trying for the crime.

When King Anthony heard this he nearly swooned away, for he made sure he had come to the land where his daughter had been, and was too late to find her alive.

Now there entered into the hall the earl with the eight letters, and he brought with him likewise the messengers. The king looked at the letters, and examined the seals, and he was much astonished. He made the messengers tell their story. Of these men seven were false witnesses, for they had been suborned by the queen-mother to say that they had come all the way from Saracenland, where King Constant had been fighting.

Then the king said, "I know but two of these men, who brought me letters from the earl, and took back my letters to him. The other men I never saw; moreover, I never wrote these letters. The writing is like mine, but it is not mine, and the seal is indeed mine."

When the queen-mother heard this, she cried out, "Put the earl to death; you have heard enough."

But the king said: "I have only heard enough to be sure that there has been treachery, not enough to tell me who committed it."

It never for one moment entered Constant's head that his mother could be guilty of such wickedness.

He asked the earl for his signet, and he showed it. He himself had one, and one had been carried to the stake, he supposed, by his unfortunate queen.

Then the Earl of Gloucester produced the hand that had been cut off. It was a very beautiful hand, and on the finger was the gold ring the king had put on his wife's hand when they were married.

King Constant wept sore, and said that indeed it was Helen's hand.

But King Anthony looked hard, and said it was not; for his daughter had a little white crescent on each finger-nail, and this hand had none.

When King Anthony declared this, then the good Earl of Gloucester professed the whole truth: how his daughter Mary had given herself to be burned in the place of her mistress, and how that this was in truth her hand, whereas the true hand of Helen was bound to the side of one of the babes. He told, moreover, how that he had sent away the poor queen in an open boat, and how that two rag dolls had been burned in place of the beautiful babes.

Now the King Constant saw that there was great difficulty to get at the bottom of the fraud that had been played, and he ordered his council to meet on

the morrow, when he would go into the matter more thoroughly; and he ordered that the messengers should be thrown into prison till they were required.

The wicked queen-mother was now fearful for herself, for she saw that in time her son would unravel the whole plot.

She sat at dinner beside King Anthony, and he noticed that she was very careful about her purse that was attached to her belt, and fearful of losing it. Moreover, she began to speak very friendly with him, and she whispered to him to come with her into the garden after the meal was ended, for she had something to say to him.

Accordingly he followed her when all rose from the table, and when they were alone she said, "This is a great and a beautiful kingdom. At Constantinople you are hard pressed by the Saracens. Here there are none to fear. If you will marry me I will poison my son, King Constant, and you shall become king of England."

"Is this your real intent?" asked Anthony.

"Yes," she said; "I will poison him to-night."

"Then," said he, "let us change our belts; you take mine, and I yours, in token that you desire to make this covenant with me."

The wicked queen-mother at once unbuckled her girdle and handed it to King Anthony, with the purse attached to it.

He took it.

Then she cried out and said, "Stay; let me first remove the purse, which I cannot part with."

"Not so," answered King Anthony; "not till we have seen what is in it."

Then he walked straight back to the hall, where were the king and his men, and he opened the purse there before all eyes, and in it was the false signet.

And immediately King Anthony proclaimed what the queen-mother had said, and he declared her to be the schemer of all the treachery.

This seemed likely enough, for there had been made three signets only, and here was a fourth that was manifestly counterfeit.

Accordingly Constant ordered the guards to remove his mother and take her to the Tower of London.

Next day a great court was held in Westminster Hall; then the messengers, who had been paid by the queen-mother to declare that they came from her son, when they found that she was arrested, at once spoke the truth, and told how that they had been bribed by her to take the letters and tell a lie as to whence they came.

The king showed the letters which had been sent him, and the earl said that these had never been written by him. Accordingly messengers were sent to Dover, and the mansion of the queen-mother was ransacked, and there were discovered the true

letters of the earl and of the king, which she had suppressed, and in place of which she had substituted others.

There was now no doubt about her guilt, and the king ordered her to be kept confined in the Tower all the rest of her life.

Now, just before the court rose there came in an old hermit with two young boys. He had arrived by ship in England, that he might put the boys in some school where they would learn more than he could teach them. On his way he saw the great commotion about Westminster Hall, and he went in, and heard people talk about the poor queen who had lost her hand, and who was herself lost with her pretty babes. Then the old man was greatly astonished, and, followed by the lads, he went up the hall, and he said, "Oh, kings, here are two boys that I rescued from a lion and a bear. I know not who they be, but one of them has a fair lady's hand, that he always carries about with him." Then he made the boy disclose the little bag in which was contained the gold brocade wrapped about the hand.

Now when King Constant saw the brocade he cried out, "This is part of the beautiful garment in which I first saw Helen, and here are still some particles of seaweed adhering to it."

And King Anthony cried out, when he saw the hand, "Verily, this is my daughter Helen's hand, for

here is a half-moon distinctly marked on every nail."

Then the two kings were greatly rejoiced, and kissed the lads that were the sons of one and the grandsons of the other.

Presently King Anthony grew grave, and said, "Now I come to think of it, under the stairs of my palace at Constantinople lives a poor woman, and she has one hand. It was passing strange—I never could see her but I thought upon my daughter, and it came about thus: every day I gave her a penny, and she closed her hand on it, and then I saw the crescent-moons in her nails. But I never considered who she might be, only, seeing these marks on her nails, I was carried in mind to my child whom I had lost."

Then said King Constant, "Let us take ship, and sail to Constantinople, and find this fair woman."

Thereupon they mounted their ships, the two kings and their escort, and they took with them the hermit, and the two boys, Lion and Brice.

They had a fair wind and a prosperous voyage, and in course of time reached Constantinople. There they went to the palace, and as they went up the steps the woman who lived below the stair opened her hand, and each cast in a gold coin; and when she closed her fingers, there on the nails were the half-moons, as King Anthony had said.

So they all stood on the head of the stairs, and the heralds blew the trumpets, and the people were gathered together, and the kings said to the boys, "Go and fetch her who lives under the stairs."

Then they went and brought her, but she trembled and wept, and supposed she was being taken to be sentenced because she had run away from home rather than marry the king of the Huns, whose ears grew where should be his eyes, and his eyes looked out of the sides of his head.

When she stood before the kings and with all the people below, King Anthony said to Brice, his grandson, "Unfold what is in the bag, and show it."

Thereat the boy Brice drew forth the woman's hand. And the king said to the woman, "Hold forth thy left arm."

She did this trembling.

Then the hand was put to the stump, and instantly it was fastened to it, and she moved her fingers just as if the hand had never been cut off.

Thereat King Constant stooped, and put on the finger the golden ring which he had drawn from the dead hand of Mary, daughter of the Earl of Gloucester. And he said, "You are my own Helen, and these are your two sons."

So there was great embracing and many tears were shed, and all the bells of Constantinople rang, and the people shouted and sang.

There was made great feasting. All the fountains spouted wine, and all the birds of the air flew about ready roasted, so as to be eaten, and the fishes swam on the waters fried or boiled, just as folk liked best. Then when the feasting was ended, King Constant and his queen returned to England with their two sons. But the name of Lion was changed to Alfred, and he was the greatest king after his father that England ever saw.

Now when Mr. Toope had ceased speaking, he looked round at the king, and he saw that he was wroth.

"You shall receive nothing for this story," said he. "It is instructive—there is in it history again."

"I assure you not," replied Jeremiah. "It is not history at all; it is rather history turned topsy-turvy. You could not, if you tried, put dates to any of the incidents in this tale."

"I care not," said the king. "It has a sort of a historical smack about it that I like not. Go on with another—a seventh tale, to put the taste of history out of my mouth."

VII.

FLOWER-DE-LUCE

THERE was a time when war had been carried on between England and France for twelve years, with great loss of life, and at great cost of money on both sides. Moreover, at the end of the twelfth year no more prospect of peace appeared than at the opening of the war.

This grieved the Fairy Morgana greatly, and she was ever a protecting genius to the island. Although fairies can intervene in the affairs of individual people, and perform great wonders, yet they never have been of any political importance, nor have their powers influenced the course of history.

Morgana's only chance of bringing this disastrous condition of affairs to an end was by drawing together the sovereign houses of France and England by a family tie.

With this end in view she one day appeared to the prince, the son of the English king, and said to him, "I have brought you a bowl of May dew. Bathe your face in it, and you shall see her who is destined to be your bride."

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The prince was keen and curious to behold the lady who was some day to be his wife, so he took the May dew and washed his face.

At once he felt as though plunged in light and warmth, and in the brilliancy that he saw before him opened a garden, and in that garden stood a beautiful girl picking an iris: she was dressed in violet-blue and gold.

As the moisture dried off the face of the prince so did the vision fade.

Now when it was clean gone he was pensive and sad, and he felt that he could not be happy, could find no rest till he had seen and spoken with that beautiful girl in person.

Then he asked the fairy Morgana who she was, and was told that her name was Flower-de-Luce, and that she was the daughter of the King of France.

Thereat the prince was startled and distressed, because the war made it a difficult, if not impossible matter for him to meet the princess. However, he sought his father and asked him to conclude the war, but the king refused to do so unless some better reason for making peace were to be found than the desire of his son to see and talk to the daughter of the King of France.

The prince, with tears in his eyes and drops of sorrow in his heart, told Morgana of the unsuccess of his interview with his father. She assured him that she would do for him what was in her power,

which was not much. She could furnish him with a pair of waxen wings, with which he could fly across the Channel and fly back again; but he must attempt this only in early morning or evening, as with the heat of the sun the wax would melt.

"So long," said she, "as the morning dew lies on the grass you are safe. Also you are safe from the moment the dews of evening begin to descend. But on no account attempt to use the waxen wings during broad day, or they will fail you."

The prince thanked Morgana, and promised to be exact in obedience to her commands. She fitted the wings to his shoulders, and before daybreak he started, flitted across the Channel as the clouds in the east were becoming tinged with crimson and gold, and he hovered over the city of Paris as the sun rose, and then he was as a golden bird against the blue sky.

He descended rapidly into the garden of the royal palace, and there he saw Flower-de-Luce walking in the morning air gathering an iris.

He came down in a part of the garden where she was not, and folding his wings he advanced towards her, saluted her with profound respect, and found her to be even more beautiful and engaging than he had imagined.

She was at first surprised and frightened, but his courteous demeanour and his graceful presence reassured her, and she listened with pleasure as he

told her who he was, and how he had seen her when his face was bathed with May dew, and how he had flown from England to France to see her, and how that he hoped if she would be his wife that the two countries might be brought to peace.

She sighed and entreated him to depart. She promised to take none but him, but she knew her father was a wrathful and impetuous man, and that if he found the prince there and in his power he would entirely disregard all the laws of chivalry, which are, indeed, greatly admired in the abstract in France but not always carried into practice—never, in fact, when contrary to personal or political advantage. She feared that if he got the prince into his power he would imprison him and not surrender him unless the English king submitted to degrading conditions.

Whilst she was speaking the voice of the king was heard. He was shouting, "Who is in the garden talking with my daughter? Send me the executioner at once! Call out the guards!"

The princess implored the prince to escape, and he immediately unfurled his waxen wings and rose on them and sped away.

But alas! the sun was hot.

The Princess Flower-de-Luce saw him fly like a bird of paradise for some way and then suddenly drop.

Full of distress and dismay she opened the garden gate and ran in the direction where she believed he might have fallen, and entered into a vast forest.

She knew not if her dear prince had come by some great hurt, or whether he had fallen among the boughs and green leaves that had received him and held him from injury.

Wand'ring all the night,
  Without dread at all,
Came that sweet lady bright,
  Within echo's call.
"You fair woods," quoth she,
"Honoured may you be,
  Harbouring my heart's delight;
Which doth encompass here
My joy and only dear,
  My trusty friend and comely knight.
Sweet, I come unto thee,
Sweet, I come to woo thee!"

As she wandered on, she heard the moaning of a man, and breaking through the bushes she discovered her prince lying sorely bruised and wounded on the ground. His waxen wings had melted in the hot sun of day, and he had fallen and been torn by the branches, and had been injured by the hard ground on which he had descended.

His pale lips, alas!
  Twenty times she kissed,
And his face did wash
  With her briny tears.

Every bleeding wound
Her fair face bedewed,
Wiping off the blood
With her golden hair.
"Speak, my love," quoth she,
"Speak, dear prince, to me,
One sweet word of comfort give;
Lift up thy fair eyes,
Listen to my cries,
Think in what great grief I live."

The prince was too much hurt to speak, he sighed and looked tenderly on Flower-de-Luce.

Then she ran in search of help, and she heard the sound of a dog barking, and she went in the direction whence proceeded the sound and came on a forester's cottage. She went in and saw an old man clothed in green, and she told him that her dear love was lying ill on the ground under a tree. So he rose up and accompanied her to the spot, and raised the prince and brought him to his lodging and tended him carefully there till he was recovered. Greatly, moreover, was he aided by an aged priest who lived as a hermit in the forest, and who was skilled in leechcraft. Now when the prince was quite restored, then there rose a great difficulty as to what was to be done. He and the princess could not escape to England, nor could she return to the palace of her father, the King of France.

She had been very careful not to tell the forester

who she was, nor who was the wounded and bruised man; and he took them to be ordinary lovers.

So when the prince was sound and strong, he proposed to him to become his assistant in the forest. He himself was getting old, and thought of giving up work, and he had as yet got no one to take his place.

The prince joyfully accepted, and then the hermit-priest married him to Flower-de-Luce, and they lived in the cottage with the old forester.

He was out all day chasing the doe, or in pursuit of the wolf and the boar, and often Flower-de-Luce took to him a little basket and his midday meal, and they sat together on the grass under an oak and ate. So five years passed, and the old forester died, and the prince succeeded in his place to be the ranger of the woods. He and his wife had three beautiful children, two boys and a little baby girl.

It fell out one hot summer's day that the prince, who was greatly fatigued, fell asleep, and Flower-de-Luce sat by him and knitted.

Now as she knitted she saw a weasel run out of her husband's mouth; a little rill was hard by, and a branch of oak had fallen across the stream. The weasel ran over the stick, and after galloping through the grass a little way entered a hole in the ground and disappeared.

Flower-de-Luce touched her sleeping prince to wake him, but he could in no way be roused.

After a full three hours had elapsed she saw the weasel come out of the same hole into which it had entered, trot over the oak branch, and dart into the mouth of the prince: whereupon he stretched himself and awoke.

The princess told her husband what she had seen, and he said, "Flower-de-Luce, I believe my soul went from me. I have dreamed, and in my dream I thought I came to an immense river, larger than the Seine or the Thames, and over it was cast a magnificent bridge. I traversed this bridge, and came to a grand portal, and entered this portal, and found myself in a sort of tunnel. I hastened through it, and came out in my own native England." Then, after a pause, he continued: "There I met the Fairy Morgana, who reproached me for having neglected attending to the instructions she had given me, and the promise I had made. She told me that she still had my interests and those of England at heart, and that she would provide me with fresh means of escape. She informed me that she would give me five very small golden pennies, and that you and I and the three children were to put them on our tongues, and thereupon we should become small as weasels, and be able to run underground through the passage that communicates between France and England, and so would come into my native island, and when there, terms of peace might be concluded with France with that generosity and dignity which characterise all

the transactions of the English Government with every people. But we must be very careful not to speak, for if we drop the golden pennies, then we shall assume our full dimensions immediately, and if that were to take place in the passage we should perish of suffocation."

The princess agreed to go with her husband wherever he wished. When he opened his purse there were the golden pennies, not much larger than pins' heads.

So next day Flower-de-Luce rolled three of these pennies in melted sugar and peppermint, and made of them three lollipops, to give to the children to suck; and she hoped she had coated them sufficiently with sweetstuff to last all the way from France to England. Of course the baby girl would be carried by her, as it was too young to walk the whole way.

So they started next evening, and each had a gold penny on the tongue, and each thereupon became quite tiny, and able to go into such a hole as a weasel can run in. The prince went first; then came Flower-de-Luce carrying the baby, and the latter was sucking the lollipop vigorously.

Then came the two little boys, each with a lollipop in his mouth. But just as the elder was entering the hole, he turned his head and said to the younger, "It is dreadfully dark in there."

Instantly the penny fell out of his mouth, and he swelled to his full size, and had not his head been at

the moment outside, he would have been buried alive, because of his swelling to fill the entire hole into which he was entering.

When he had extricated himself with great difficulty, then he joined his brother behind, also restored to his full height, because he had been so astonished at what had taken place that he also let the penny fall out of his mouth.

When Flower-de-Luce perceived that something was gone wrong, with great prudence she turned back, and uttered no word till she was outside again; then she spoke and learned the truth from the boys. At the same time she dropped the gold penny, and resumed her natural size. The prince had not gone far without looking behind him, and when he perceived that his wife had retreated, he also returned.

It was now impossible to think of the passage any more, and the prince settled down as forester in the wood, and lived there for six years longer, during all which time the war continued with unabated ferocity, for owing to the disappearance of the prince, the King of England accused the French king of having sent secret emissaries into the island to steal or to assassinate him; and the King of France laid a similar charge against the King of England because he had lost his daughter.

Now it fell out that the king announced that he would hunt in the forest with his nobles, and the forester was to prepare to meet him.

As to the prince, who by this time had seven children—

He clothed his children then,
Not like to other men,
  In party-colours strange to see ;
The right side cloth of gold,
The left side to behold
  Of woollen cloth still framed he.

The King of France came thither,
It being pleasant weather,
  In the woods the hart to chase.
The children then did stand
On right and on left hand,
  Each had a pleasant face ;

Their mother richly clad
In crimson, rich brocade,
  Their father all in grey.
And then this gallant king,
Noting of everything,
  Did ride that way.

Now when the king saw the forester's wife in gold and pearl and crimson velvet, and the children half dressed in gold and half in grey, he was wroth. He deemed it a most daring piece of pride in the forester to deck out his homespun wife in such fashion, and that he should put gold cloth on his children.

But when he drew nigher, then he recognised his own daughter, and he was sore abashed.

"How is this?" he cried; "a princess of France so demean herself as to marry a common forester of no

birth! This is high treason, and she shall be burned alive, she and all her seven brats of children."

His nobles interfered, and entreated the king to spare the poor princess and her children. But he would not listen; he cried out, "It is demeaning the royal blood of France! If she had wed a duke or a marquis I might have forgiven her. I would even have pardoned her, and that joyfully, had she married the son of mine enemy, the King of England; but to take to her a common forester is more than I can endure. Away with her and her brats to the fire."

Then the forester knelt to the king on one knee, and said, "And what if the prince of England had married your daughter?"

"Then I would have been glad, and have made peace with the king of that saucy isle."

"I am he," said the prince at once. "I came here out of love to your daughter. I have married her, and these are our children, partly clothed in the glittering display of France, and partly in the sterling linsey-woolsey of old England, that does not make great show, but is tough."

Then the King of France was as good as his word. He forgave his daughter. He set all the bells in Paris a-ringing, and all the choristers a-singing, and all the butlers a-pouring forth of good wine, and all the cooks a-cooking, that honest men might dine.

Then was peace made between Britain and France, after war having lasted twenty-five years.

After that for many hundreds of years on the arms of England were displayed, along with its golden lions, the silver fleurs-de-lys.

"There, you are once more doing what I forbade," said the king angrily. "Again at history."

"I cannot help myself," pleaded Mr. Jeremiah; "I am from head to foot a schoolmaster. I assure your Majesty that my stories are calculated to confuse minds as to the stern realities of history, and not to enlighten them. Will not that satisfy you?"

"Do not be angry," said the queen; "he really does not mean to instruct."

"Well," said the king, "let him take his own course; but I solemnly warn him, unless he keeps clear of historical personages and historical themes, he shall have no whortleberries."

The Princess Noyalen looked piteously, pleadingly at the king.

"Well," said he, "I can deny you nothing, my best-loved child. If Mr. Toope will solemnly assure me that the story he has told tends to obfuscate the mind relative to history, instead of enlightening it, I will allow you to give him another berry."

"I assure your Highness, no manner of sifting could extract a grain of fact out of the tale I have told."

"I am content," said the king.

Then again the schoolmaster was given a little purple berry, and when he had tasted it, then his second eye became clear, and he saw the sweet face of the Princess Noyalen twice as distinctly as he did before.

With beating heart he began the eighth tale.

VIII.

THE WATER OF LIGHT

THE great, fertile, and populous realm of Loegria is not a kingdom, but a queendom; that is to say, it is always governed by a woman. This is because the so-called Silic Law holds good in Loegria. This law requires the succession to the Crown to pass through females to females, and excludes males. Consequently the son of the queen does not ascend the throne on her death, but the daughter mounts it, and the prince is married off with a portion to some neighbouring potentate's daughter.

At the time of this history the Queen of Loegria was Euphrasia. She was even liked by those about her person constantly; she was loved by those who saw her occasionally; and the bulk of her subjects adored her image on the current coin of the realm.

Queen Euphrasia had two children—a son, Prince Floribel, and a daughter, two years younger, the Princess Coeca. According to Silic Law, the princess was predestined to succeed her mother. But three years after her birth a great affliction fell on her. She became blind, and by the Silic Law

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this would prevent her attainment of the crown, for the sovereign was required to be sound in body and in mind. In the event of the princess remaining blind, the succession would pass, after the death of the queen, to her sister, Pomarea, the widow of the King of Limonia, the adjoining realm. It was suspected by some, believed and insisted on by others, that Queen Pomarea had procured from a bad fairy that a spell should be cast on her niece, afflicting her with blindness, to prevent her from ever obtaining the crown of Loegria, in the hopes of uniting under her own sceptre the two contiguous realms.

It was the custom in Loegria for the queen to be given a husband. A respectable, amiably disposed man was chosen for the purpose from among the dethroned sovereigns in the world, who were shelved. Such a man was always revaccinated before his marriage ceremony, his nails cut, and his moustache waxed, and he was given the title of Serene Highness, and went by the familiar name of "the Hubby." So as not to offend the realm which had ejected him, he was allowed no place in the Government or command in the army. After the Hubbies had been consorts for a while, and the queen was blessed with a daughter, they were no longer needed; and, as a relief to the finances, were destroyed by the application of a drop of nicotine on the tongue.

In this way, after the birth of Princess Coeca, the father of Floribel and Coeca had been destroyed. It was afterwards regretted, when Coeca lost her sight and with it her eligibility to the throne. Prince Floribel and Princess Coeca loved each other tenderly. At first he thought nothing of the infirmity of his sister, as he was but a child, and a child is inconsiderate.

But as he grew older he began to understand how great was her privation. Coeca had large, soft, beautiful brown eyes, but there was no light in them. In the depths it was as though something intervened that was impenetrable. Floribel could not see her happy, innocent soul look out through these windows.

As to her blindness being a bar to the crown, of that he did not think.

One day he went to the queen.

He told his mother that he could not be at ease so long as Coeca remained blind. He asked her if there were any means whereby her sight might be restored.

Euphrasia answered, weeping, that she had consulted the physicians, who had recommended various pills, and she had administered these pills for an entire year to her daughter, and with them had made her seriously ill. Then she consulted the apothecaries, who had advised her to cover the face of the princess with plaster, to shave her head, and plaster

that as well. This she had not liked to do, lest it should permanently disfigure Coeca, and disfigurement would as certainly incapacitate her for mounting the throne as would blindness.

Then she had consulted the quacks, who had sold her electrical toe-rings to draw the irritation away from the eyes, or to establish a therapeutic current. But although this treatment had been expensive, and had necessitated the addition of a penny in the pound to the income-tax, it had availed nothing. As a last resource, she had appealed to Coeca's fairy godmother, and this fairy had informed her that nothing could recover the princess of her blindness save a drop of the Water of Light.

"And where is this water?" inquired the prince.

"It springs out of a glacier among the Mountains of the Moon," replied his mother.

"I will go for it," said he.

"There are dangers in the way," remarked Euphrasia.

"I contemn them," answered Floribel.

"You have not yet ascertained what they are," said the queen sharply.

"What are they?" asked the prince.

"This is like you men," said she. "First you say you despise the dangers, and then inquire what they may be. I esteem the wisdom of the ancients of Loegria, who established the Silic Law in the realm."

After a pause the queen said, "You must go to the fairy godmother, and inquire of her. Follow this."

She plucked a hair from her head, blew it away, and said, "That will lead you to Coeca's godmother. Go after it at once."

As the hair sailed out of the window in a current of air, Floribel leaped forth after it, and pursued where the hair drifted.

It led him through the country of Limonia, but his aunt, Queen Pomarea, did not stay him, for the news of the purport of his journey had not reached her. The wind at the time was blowing from Limonia to Loegria, and so it carried all the tittle-tattle of the former realm to the latter. Had it been contrary, the Queen of Limonia would have known about the intention of Floribel, and have intercepted his journey.

Now it was a remarkable fact that the hair of Queen Euphrasia travelled, as do thunderstorms, against the wind.

Prince Floribel went a day's journey in the country beyond Limonia. He was much struck with the quantities of gossamer that hung to the hedges and was spangled with dew. But he would not have delayed to investigate it had not his mother's hair lodged in a web. Then he put his finger to it, to disengage the guiding hair. Instantly the web was inflated by the wind, and before he could recover

from his surprise, it had enveloped him, and he was carried off his feet and wafted to the clouds.

He was so frightened, that for a moment he lost consciousness, and when he recovered it he found himself in the Fairy World, and a kind old fairy stood before him.

She smiled, held out her hand to him, and said—

"I am Coeca's godmother. Here in the Fairy World we also obey the Silic Law, and make the males do menial work. We are the governing power, executive and administrative. I will do for you what I can, for your purpose is good. You shall visit the Mountains of the Moon. I cannot greatly assist you, but I will give you three things that may be serviceable to you—a pin-tray, your mother's hair after I have manipulated it, and a bit of advice."

The prince expressed his most profound thankfulness. He was extremely well educated. Actually, he did not think the pin-tray or the advice worth much, and his mother's hair he had already.

The fairy promptly handed him a little sandalwood tray. Then she took his mother's hair and stroked it, and lo! it grew long, and ever longer, and she twisted and reeled it off on a spindle. And she said, "*Never ask for more than the least you require.*"

Then the prince inquired the use of the pin-tray, and she said, "When you require a boat, step into it. As to the hair, look!" She cast an end before

her, and the spindle began to unwind rapidly, as the end of the hair flew away, till no more than one extremity remained, fast to a notch in the spindle-wood.

"There!" said she. "Follow the guiding line; lay hold of the end and wind as you go along, and unwind as you come back. Going, it will lead you aright; returning, it will restrain you."

Again the prince started. The gossamer sail enveloped him and wafted him down to the land below; yet always he held the spindle and wound at the hair.

As he set his feet on earth, he observed a rusty, dirty crowbar, that had been used by labourers or quarrymen or masons, who were out on strike and had neglected this useful tool, and left it to be rust-eaten.

The prince was indignant that so valuable an implement should be thus disregarded, and, picking it up, with sand he rubbed it clean. Then he laid it on his shoulder, and still holding and winding the hair, he went forward.

Presently he arrived at a new and stately palace, as yet unoccupied, that had been erected by a distinguished architect, who prided himself on his originality. But it was inconvenient in several ways. It was two hundred and fifteen feet long and only twelve feet wide, exclusive of the offices. All the windows looked north.

The sun, which is so lavish of its light, could not by any means shine into the apartments, and was constrained to envelop the back premises alone in its golden beams. The state halls and reception-rooms were superbly painted, gilded, and upholstered, but their beauties were imperfectly seen on account of the lack of light.

The sun was under a compact to rise in the east and to set in the west, and, desire as he did to illumine the apartments, he could not do so. He went in rising as far E.N.E. as his conscience would allow him, but no further. To rise N.N.E. would have been immoral. He could not do it.

The house, moreover, was unhappy because it could not make display of its splendours, and it had been twisting and straining to get round, so that cracks had opened in it which the architect called settlements.

The prince, who had a tender and sympathetic heart, pitied both the sun, which desired to do a kind thing, and the house, condemned to be without sunshine in its rooms. If the workmen had not been all on strike he would have summoned them, and with the assistance of cranes and levers and jacks, would have shifted the house round. But as the workmen were unavailable, he said, "Even with a crowbar and my two arms I may achieve something."

There were some logs lying about. So the prince

set to work, dug under the foundations, and kicked the rollers in as he raised the house ends with the crowbar, that served as a lever. Archimedes said that he could shift the position of the world with one if he could find a fulcrum, and the prince managed to turn the house a point from the north. Then he shifted the rollers, and again applied the bar, and met with further success.

He toiled on energetically, never doing very much each time, but something, and every point gained was something. He did not cease from his labours till he had completely turned the house about, so that the face was presented to the sun, and the back premises were left in shade.

Then Floribel knocked away the rollers, and the house settled down on its foundations, and the cracks closed. Just as the prince was about to leave, he noticed a lanky ivy plant in a pot in one of the windows. This plant had been neglected, and its roots had filled the pot and consumed the soil. It had consequently become feeble and sickly in colour.

Prince Floribel pitied the poor plant, and removed it from the pot, and planted it in rich soil against the palace.

As he was thus engaged, he heard a sighing and a sobbing proceeding from the palace. The state apartments, instead of being filled with joy, were lamenting. They had thought themselves so splendid

in their velvet upholstery and gilding, that the sun would make them superlatively resplendent; however, instead of that it revealed dust, cobwebs, moth-holes, and mildew.

The sobbing was produced by humbled pride. Floribel stood amazed. Then he heard the rooms say in muffled tones, "If we can help you with our former gloom—that is now superfluous, command us."

He saw that the leaves of the ivy were glistening and dripping—it was with tears of gratitude, because it had space in which to expand its roots. And it said, "I also, if I can, will help you." "And I," said the sun, "will give you my light, for you have enabled me to look into the state apartments, and I hated to be excluded—I—the king of luminaries."

The prince pursued his way, winding the hair on the spindle as he went on. After a long march over a barren limestone plateau he came to the edge of a chasm one thousand feet deep, at the bottom of which rolled the River of Light.

Up this river he must travel to the source. He clambered cautiously down the precipice, clinging to bushes. At the bottom of the ravine the vegetation was luxurious. The river was beautiful, and flashed like diamonds.

Now Floribel placed his pin-tray in the water, stepped into it, and it expanded into a boat. He took a pole and punted.

The stream ran strong, and in places rushed in rapids. Floribel alternately punted and wound the hair, and with great labour advanced against the current. He was obliged to guide the little barque in its course to avoid rocks. It took Floribel the entire day to ascend the river.

At last he saw the glacier of the moon shining before him, half-way up the heavens, and seeming to be sliding out of the sky. The sun was setting, and its red rays lit the glacier-head. Below in the gorge all was dark save the River of Light. That emitted a bluish gleam, like the lantern of the glow-worm, for it required the sunlight to make it sparkle like diamonds.

From the glacier fell a waterfall, that broke into drops of light. By a bold stroke Floribel brought his boat under the pearly rain, and caught a drop in the palm of his left hand.

Then he knew that he had got what he wanted, and he turned the head of the boat and shot down the river. It was night now, and he could see nothing of the mighty cliffs on each side. He saw only the bluish flashes of the river, and overhead a strip of sky, in which the stars twinkled. He could use one hand only, for he was obliged to hold the left palm turned upwards, with the drop of the Water of Light in it.

As he proceeded, with the spindle under his arm rapidly unreeling, he found his difficulties increase.

The Water of Light was deceptive. It was luminous on the surface only, and so concealed the rocks over which it flowed, and Floribel could neither distinguish where to strike his pole nor what to avoid.

Then he wished it were day, and that the sun shone. But he checked the thought, remembering the advice of the fairy, and desired to have only sufficient sunlight to illumine the drop in his hand, so as to serve him as a lamp. Hardly had he framed this wish, before a ray of sunlight, that had lost its way or had loitered after the set of day, fell and filled the prince's open palm, illuminating the drop of water and making it blaze.

Floribel held his hand above his eyes, and the light flowed over the river and penetrated to its profoundest depths. It cast fantastic shadows from the palm and elm trees on the banks upon the precipitous crags on each side.

Thus the prince travelled on, checking his descent by means of the thread of hair, which he allowed to unwind only cautiously as he went down the stream.

He looked in vain for the spot where he had descended from the plateau above. He did not know where to arrest his course nor whither flowed the River of Light.

Presently he was alarmed to hear a thundering sound, which he did not remember to have noticed before. It was the roar of a mighty waterfall. The

thunder of falling water became momentarily louder and more deafening, and in his agitation the prince let slip the spindle with the reeled hair. There was now no check on his descent. The river ran with great rapidity; it became like a mill-race. Now he saw before him a vast cavern, and into this the river plunged and disappeared.

His heart stood still, and he so trembled that the shining drop in his hand danced and almost fell.

Would the boat and he be engulfed in the yawning abyss? Oh that some mighty tree flung its branches across the river, that he might cling to it, and be saved! But no, an ivy-lace would suffice, thought he. Instantly he saw a frail streamer of ivy hanging down the cliff, wavering in the draught from the river as it leaped into the jaws of the earth. Floribel caught it with his right hand just in time, clung to it, and his boat shot from under his feet, went over the edge, and disappeared in the hideous chasm.

Holding to the ivy, Floribel climbed. He could use but one hand, so that his ascent was painful and slow. However, he persevered, and after two hours reached the summit of the precipice, and was once again on the limestone plateau.

He knew his direction, for he had learned astronomy, and took his course by the Polar star.

After he had been walking for many hours the sun rose, and he recognised that he was approaching the

confines of Limonia. It would not do for him to enter his aunt's territories with the drop of water in his hand by means of which he hoped to destroy the prospect of Pomarea's succession to the crown of Loegria. He would be arrested at the frontier and be deprived of the precious drop. It would be well were some of the old disused gloom of the palace to envelop and conceal him. Yet no; that would be exacting too much: he needed sufficient only to obscure the drop of the Water of Light that he held aloft.

Instantly what he desired took place. A shade fell and quenched the brilliancy of the drop. It seemed to everyone who encountered him that he held nothing.

When he reached Limonia, great was the merriment provoked. The custom-house officers reported to the queen that her nephew had arrived empty-handed.

The queen said, " I thought it would be so. He has either failed to catch a drop from the source, or else, if he caught one, he has spilt it by the way. Let him pass through my lands—he is innocuous."

So Floribel traversed the kingdom of Limonia unmolested, but exposed to the mockery of rude boys.

When the prince arrived in Loegria, he hastened at once to his sister's room in the palace, and found her there at a window, expecting his return; but

being blind, she sat with her back to the prospect and her face to the wall.

Floribel did not speak, but running to her, dashed the water in her eyes. At once, with a cry as of pain, she sprang to her feet—she saw!

I need not declare the happiness of Floribel, nor how full of wonder was Coeca at all she saw, nor how glad was the queen-mother, nor how great were the rejoicings of the people, nor how exceeding was the vexation of Pomarea.

All at once the fairy godmother appeared, and said, "You have done well in fulfilling what I advised. Had you not done so, you would not have returned. When you found the masons on strike, you would have liked to call them together and set them to work to alter the aspect of the palace. But you contented yourself with doing what you could with the crowbar. Had you summoned the men, then the ingenious architect, to show his originality, would have interfered and inverted the palace, making of the floor a roof, and the chimneys he would have converted into cellar stairs. You would not have enjoyed the gratitude of the house nor of the solar orb. You helped the poor ivy, and in time of necessity the ivy assisted you. When you half desired that the sun should shine on you, had you fully wished it, you would have been so enveloped in dazzling light as not to see the river and the rocks. But you wished for light in sufficiency only,

no more. When about to be engulfed, you were inclined to wish for a tree-bough to which to cling. Happily for you, you did not do so, but desired only a strand of ivy. A branch would have saved you from plunging into the abyss, but would have in no way assisted you to reach the summit of the precipitous crags. You would have held to the bough, and remained on it till your powers failed, and you would have dropped into the water and perished miserably. When you reached Limonia, you were disposed to desire to be enwrapped in the gloom of the mansion you had turned about; fortunately for you, you corrected the wish into one more moderate. Had you desired to be cloaked in darkness, you would have passed through Limonia as a column of blackness, and have been a general object of wonder and alarm. Some would have thrust at you with pikes; others, conceiving you to be a water-spout, would have discharged cannons at you, to dissolve you. And now, in conclusion, my dear Floribel, I put the crowbar at your disposal. Hard and steely as it may seem, it is not insensible, and it is grateful for what you did to it. Behave to men as you have to the crowbar: however rugged and rusty they may be, behave to them with consideration and respect, as useful in their spheres, and you will never regret it. Moreover, I recommend you to retain this crowbar as long as the strike lasts, and this will, presumably, last till trade is driven

out of the country. Finding nobody to do what you want for you—learn to do it yourself; live to be independent."

The prince thanked the fairy, and asked if he might open his heart to her by propounding another question. She assented.

Then he informed her that the sour, envious, and resentful temper of his aunt was very distressing to him, and he ventured to inquire whether the crowbar could be used as a moral as well as a physical agent.

"Most assuredly," replied the fairy. "You saw yourself what a transformation it effected in the palace. Try it, by all means, on Queen Pomarea. You can hardly employ the crowbar to a better purpose."

Accordingly Prince Floribel, having disguised himself, found access to the royal residence of Limonia, and there laboured with the crowbar to change the aspect of his aunt. Hitherto she had looked persistently north at Loegria with an ambitious and malevolent eye. But by sedulous application of the crowbar as a lever to the throne, Floribel succeeded in turning it about, point by point, with his aunt upon it, on rollers, till it finally faced south. Then the sun streamed into the recesses of Queen Pomarea's heart, and showed her all the mean and covetous and spiteful thoughts it had harboured. Then, for very shame, she cried,

and her tears carried away every soil, and left her heart to be filled with light and love and regard for the queen, her sister, for Coeca, and for Prince Floribel.

"That is better," said the king. "This story clearly belongs to the domain of fancy. Yes, my dear Noyalen, you may give him something by way of encouragement."

Then the fairy maid stooped, and up through the mat of moss came two skeleton hands holding a vessel of gold. She took it, and the hands were withdrawn. Only Jeremiah saw them groping at the coverlet of moss, and drawing it together again, till no token remained of the opening through which they had been protruded.

Noyalen came to the schoolmaster, bearing the goblet.

It must be understood that although the time was night, yet that a mysterious, beautiful pale light illumined the whole interior of the circle, and shone forth reflected on the faces of the pixy crowd without.

Noyalen came towards Mr. Toope holding aloft the golden vessel. And now she spoke, and her words were as music in his ear.

"See," she cried, "this is for you if you can bring the smile back on the lips of the queen, my mother."

He would have put forth his hands and taken it,

but she shook her head and said, "Not yet; she has forgotten the hedgehog. Her tears indeed are dried. She listens attentively, but she has not as yet smiled."

"Then," said Jeremiah, "I must again tell a tale, and this will be the ninth."

"It is well," said the king; "we are ready to hear it."

"But stay," said the princess, "let him be rewarded first."

She put with her tiny fingers a berry between his lips, and at once his second ear heard clearly, distinctly. He heard her breath pass between her coral lips. He heard even the grass grow, and the hearts of the birds beat as they flew through the air. He heard more even than that; he heard the granite rocks as they disintegrated, and little bits of mica, and quartz, and feldspar dropped away, worn by the action of the wind and rain. He heard the clouds rub one against another high aloft as they came in contact, sailing in the breeze; and he heard the drops of dew as they fell on the sprays and blades of grass about him. He had acquired a faculty of hearing such as had never before been obtained by mortal man. And now also he could hear the pulses of his hearers quicken as his tale excited their interest, or slacken as it became tedious to them.

GENERIDES

IX.

GENERIDES

IT fell out that Auferus, King of India, was thrust from his kingdom, and in this wise was it:—

Auferus above all things loved the chase, and for the love that he had to the chase he neglected his kingdom, its affairs, and his duties. There be in the crown of a king many jewels, but every jewel weighs heavier than lead. Now Auferus cared not for the burden of his crown, but only for his pleasures. Thus it was that he was despoiled of his estate.

One day this king had ridden forth a-hunting. And he saw and pursued a hart that was yellow as gold, and had gilded horns; and in pursuit of this hart he was separated from all his fellows, and he rode on and never attained to the hart at the setting of the sun.

Then Auferus found himself in a strange country, and in a forest that had no bounds; and the way by which he had come he wist not, nor the way out of the forest. Presently he was aware of a little house with flowers growing about, and a fair

maid stood at the gate, and as he came she opened to him. She bade him welcome; there were, she said, none there save herself and a serving-maid and a very aged man.

She invited him to come within, and she made a supper for the king, and brought forth goodly wine, and entertained him marvellously well, and he wondered greatly who she was, and how she came there into the midst of that lone forest.

So he asked when he had eaten and drunk.

Then she replied: "I will tell thee all right gladly. My name is Sereine, and I am daughter and only child to the King of Syria, that lives at Damascus. Now it fell out that a ferocious wretch, the Old Man of the Mountain, all whose followers be assassins, had set his heart to win me as his bride. Then the king, my father, took counsel with his wise men what he should do, and they bade him send me away under the charge of the Bishop Nicholas, my tutor and governor, till the Old Man of the Mountain had found a wife elsewhere; they further bade him make answer that his daughter was learning algebra with her tutor and governor, and that till she had reached equations she was not marriageable. So here be I, hidden in this wood for fear of the Old Man, the King of the Assassins."

Thereupon up spake Auferus and said, "Fair and sweet Princess Sereine, I am a king, and this is my

kingdom, and right glad will I be if you will take me to your husband, and I will have much to say with that same Old Man of the Mountain if he be wroth that thou hast chosen me and rejected his suit."

And to this Sereine cheerfully agreed.

Then were the tapers lit, and Bishop Nicholas put on his robes and sang and prayed and blessed them, and made of the twain to be one by the grace of God.

Now Auferus tarried in the little house in the wood for days and weeks, even to a month, and thought nothing of his kingdom, so glad was he to have leisure to hunt, and so happy was he in the love and company of his fair wife Sereine.

It fell out that one morning he awakened very early with hearing a sighing and a sobbing, and so his shirt was wet as though it had been dipped in the sea, and even salter was it, for it was wet with the tears that fell from the eyes of Sereine. Then he asked his wife wherefore she made such moan. And she said:—

"Good husband and sweet sir, last night I saw the yellow hart with golden horns run through the chamber. And that hart was sent by my father. It brought you to me, and now it is come to bid me haste with all speed to my father; and I know that he needeth me, for his glove is under the circlet of gold round the hart's neck, and that

was to be a token betwixt us. And now rise up also, and go to your capital city and proclaim your marriage there. And know this, that none shall ever be able to wash your shirt and wash out the tears that I have shed, save only I who shed them."

Then Sereine busked her to depart with her maid and the Bishop Nicholas, and right woe to part were she and Auferus.

Now when she was gone, then the king also mounted his horse and rode away through the forest, and after much wandering came to a charcoal-burner's hut, and he entered to ask the way.

It happened that the charcoal-burner and his wife were speaking together, and the king heard what they said, and this was the substance of their speech: That Ameloc, the chief minister and uncle of the king, had conspired against him, and as he was gone a-hunting and had been lost, the people agreed to have Ameloc to reign over them, whether Auferus were alive or dead. Further, Ameloc had set a price of a thousand ounces of gold on the head of Auferus, whether alive or dead.

Now when the king heard this, then was he sore abashed, and because he knew that the charcoal-burner was honest and true, he declared himself to him, and said that he would abide in the hut whilst the man went into the city to see how matters were,

and whether the nobles and the soldiery and the people would receive him if he returned amongst them, or whether they would slay him.

Then the charcoal-burner gladly undertook to find out all this, and he was away for three days; and when he returned it was with a sad countenance.

The people, he declared, had been so won by the favour of Ameloc, who had made the conduits run wine, and had scattered comfits on them from the church towers, that they had shouted, "Long live King Ameloc!" And the soldiers had been won by promises to be made all officers and to have their pay doubled; and the nobles had all been secured, for they had been locked up in a castle, and Ameloc had cut off the heads of such as would not take the oath of allegiance to him.

Then Auferus saw plainly that he could not return to his capital city.

He rewarded the charcoal-burner, and rode away till his horse fell under him, and then he went a-foot till he came into the realm of Persia, and there he was fain to serve in the king's palace for food and for hire. And so trusty did he prove, that in time he was advanced to be the steward.

But now the story must turn about, and tell how it fared with Sereine, the daughter of the

King of Syria. She hasted on her way, and ever before her ran the gold-coloured hart, and she made little tarrying till she arrived at Damascus. There she learned that her father was ill, and in a few days he died, and then was she proclaimed queen of the land of Syria in his room.

Now it came about that in time Sereine bore a son, and the Bishop Nicholas baptised it; and the name given to the child was Generides.

The queen wondered greatly that she heard no tidings of the King of India. She expected every day, but he came not, neither did he send. And she was grieved to the heart.

Many years passed, and no tidings coming Sereine grew more sick at soul, and wept continuously. But the boy Generides grew, and seeing how sorrowful his mother was, he begged leave of her that he might go into India and seek his father. To this the queen agreed, and she gave him a companion named Nathaniel, and to Nathaniel she gave a ring as token from her to Auferus.

Then Nathaniel and the young Generides fared away, and they journeyed with little tarrying till they came into the kingdom of India; and the night before they arrived in the chief city they lodged in the hut of a charcoal-burner.

Him they asked after Auferus; and the char-

coal-burner said, "Alas, masters! That was our good king. But his uncle, Ameloc, conspired against him and holds the kingdom, and no man knoweth where Auferus is. Here he lodged a night or more, and then he went away, and I wist not whither he went and where he be. Nay, my masters, but I doubt not that he is dead."

When Generides heard this, then he knew that it was in vain for him to go on further to the chief city in quest of his father. So he took counsel with Nathaniel, and they plucked a feather out of Generides his cap and threw it in the air, and they watched which way went the feather, and in that way they rode, seeking Auferus. And in time they came to Persia, where they appeared before the sultan, and to him Generides offered his services.

The sultan saw he was a comely and stalwart youth, and he welcomed him courteously, and said in gentle fashion, "I am content to have you in my service, but tell me your name."

Then Generides said how he was called.

Now the sultan had a daughter and only heir, whose name was Clarionas, and she saw the beautiful youth and set her heart on him, and he also saw and loved the sweet maid Clarionas.

But as she could not come to speak with him, she became sad and white and wan, like to the moon as she wanes. And she had a maid called

Mirabell, who asked her mistress what ailed her, and at last to Mirabell did Clarionas confess her love for Generides.

It was even the same with the young prince. He lost all heart in sport, and all zest in work, and greatly concerned over him was Nathaniel, and he lay heavy on him to tell what ailed him.

Then at the last Generides opened his mind, and told him that he must die unless he came to speak with Clarionas.

On the next day, as Nathaniel was walking in the court troubled in mind, there came to him Mirabell, and asked after his young master. Then the faithful Nathaniel told her how ill he was in heart; and Mirabell came to understand, and each spake fully to the other, and so it was agreed that Mirabell should open the garden gate and that the lovers should be suffered to meet.

So it was that Generides was admitted into the garden. Now it need hardly be told how that their conversation became pleasant the one with the other; and before they parted they exchanged rings in token of their love.

It so fell out that there was a certain knight, Malichias by name, who lusted after mulberries, and there grew in all Persia but one mulberry tree, and that tree grew in the sultan's garden. And as he could not rest till he had eaten mulberries, he climbed the wall, and he was up in the tree a-gathering of the

fruit when beneath the tree met the lovers and exchanged rings.

And Malichias waited till they were parted, and when none were in the garden he descended from the mulberry tree, and went even as he was into the presence of the sultan.

Then the sultan looked at him and said, "Why is thy mouth so black, Malichias? Hast thou eaten of the mulberries in my garden?"

Thereat the recreant knight said, "I indeed did pick and eat one mulberry that had fallen on the ground off thy tree, but Generides, he will snatch away thy very daughter from the midst of thy kingdom, and make himself king in thy stead, because Clarionas, she is thine heir."

When the sultan heard this he waxed wroth, and ordered that Generides should be cast into prison, and laden with chains, and be given bread and water, and that there should he lie till he was dead.

The story now turns about and goes on to tell how that Sereine, the fair queen in Syria, sorrowed more than ever because her son returned not. She had lost both her husband and her child, therefore had she no comfort, day nor night.

At length she bore it no more. She committed the care of her kingdom to a faithful minister, and departed out of her land in quest of her husband and her lost son.

Now is good Queen Sereine on her journey. She

took with her a knight and two squires and seven servants, and went to the kingdom of India, and reached the charcoal-burner's cottage.

Then she lodged the night in his hut, and he told her how that her husband and her son had been there, and he said how that King Auferus was rejected out of his kingdom, and that Ameloc reigned in his room, and as for Auferus, he wist not where he was. He told likewise how that Generides had been there, and how he had plucked a feather from his cap, and had cast it into the air, and had ridden away whither the wind had wafted the feather.

Then the queen plucked a golden hair out of her head, and she held it aloft, and the light wind uncurled the hair and carried it in such and such a direction, and ever holding the hair above in her hand, she went on in the direction whither her golden hair pointed.

So in course of time she and her attendants arrived in the kingdom of Armenia, and she came to a little house down by the river-side, and there she lodged, because that when she came into Armenia, and to the fair city of Erzeroom, then her golden hair sank and fluttered no longer.

So she asked questions, but none could tell her of Auferus, for indeed, inadvertently he had not called himself by his true name, but said that he was hight Deprivatus. She sent forth the knight and squires to inquire on every side, but they brought in no news;

and the sad queen ever sat in the window holding her golden hair, and blew it so that it might unfurl and point the way if that she should go further.

And so it fell out that one day, as she thus sat, she marked three laundresses down by the river-side—

All doing their business—
A shirt to wash. Then said she to these three,
"What do ye here, fair sisters mine?" quoth she.
Spoke one of them, "That were good to know;
It is a wondrous wish with little doubt
To wash a shirt, and ever still I trow
For two long years, and never bring about
That we can wash the many spots thereout."

Now when the queen heard this, she said, "Show me the shirt, and I will try what I can do with it."

No sooner had the queen kneeled down by the waterside and dipped the shirt than all the stains ran out of it, and it was washed whiter than snow. Then she gave the shirt to the laundresses, and they took it to Auferus. But he, when he saw it, cried out, and bade them haste and bring to him her who had washed the shirt; and when he saw her he knew his own wife, and she knew him, and they wept and were comforted.

And now must we return to tell of Generides, who was in prison.

It fell out that whilst he was there, the Old Man of the Mountain, who had been waiting to be married for many years, and been biting his nails till he had

bitten them down to the quick, in his waiting for a wife, sent a deputation to the Sultan of Persia to say that he had learned that he had a beautiful daughter named Clarionas, and that unless the sultan gave him his daughter forthwith in marriage he would send his assassins into Persia to murder all his nobles and great men and ministers, one by one, and finally would kill him, the sultan, as well.

Now the sultan was sore alarmed at this threat, for he knew how terrible a foe the Old Man of the Mountain was; and while he was considering, suddenly Malichias was stabbed as he stood by the throne, and the assassin fled before anyone was prepared to arrest him.

That was the warning given to the sultan.

And next day another of his nobles was slain in the same manner, and the third day another fell, and the whole city was filled with terror, for none knew where the dagger lurked, and who was in league with the Old Man of the Mountain.

The tidings of what was happening came to Generides in prison, and he sent his faithful servant Nathaniel to the sultan, and said that if he were set free, then he would give to the sultan such advice as would free him from fear of the King of the Assassins. The sultan, being in deadly alarm, consented, and Generides was brought before him.

Then said Generides, "Send me and many men to guard the frontier, and I will draw around it a

line of loadstones, and whenever any assassin draws near, his deadly weapon will leap out of his belt or wheresoever he has hidden it, and will cleave to a loadstone; and whensoever such an one appears thus secretly armed, hew off his right hand and put out his right eye, and send him back to the King of the Assassins."

And so it was, that after that, every attempt of the Old Man was foiled, and his murderers returned to him maimed of a hand and blind of an eye.

Now when he found that he was thus discomfited, he was the more resolved to obtain Clarionas to wife, for hitherto none had been able to resist his power, all had cowered before him in fear, because of his legion of secret assassins. And very well he knew that if he were frustrated by the King of Persia, then his men would think that his strength or his wit was gone, and would desert him.

Now when he thought on these things, there came before him one of his councillors, named Wyvell, who said, "Trust the matter to me, and I will obtain the princess for thee." So the Old Man of the Mountain agreed, and Wyvell set forth.

He took with him a ship and men, but no weapons at all. Therefore, when they came to the coast of Persia, and gave themselves out to be merchantmen, they were suffered to disembark, and none feared them, for all thought these men quite harmless.

Now Wyvell came to the court of the sultan, and

gave out that he could eat for twenty-four hours without stopping. The sultan was exceedingly curious to see this feat, and he summoned Wyvell into his presence. There the assassin had a great bowl of peas brought in, and he drew forth a pair of ivory chopsticks, and he played with the chopsticks, and threw the peas, one at a time, into his mouth, and so continued hour after hour, and never came to any end, so small was the mouthful each time; and the sultan looked on till his eyes closed and he could watch no longer.

Then was Wyvell dismissed with great praise. And next day the emissary of the Old Man of the Mountain said, "I can whistle and make mulberries come down out of a tree, one by one, and jump into my mouth."

Then the sultan was very eager to see this feat, but Wyvell said, "Sire, I have heard say that the princess, your daughter, sets great store on the mulberries, and that it will trouble her exceedingly if I eat them. I advise that she be sent away to your summer palace by the seashore, and that whilst she is away I show you my achievement with the mulberries."

The sultan said, "It shall be so." And he gave commands, and the princess was placed in a litter, and was conveyed to the seashore. Then Wyvell was conducted into the garden, and he sat himself down under the mulberry tree and whistled, and

immediately down fell one of the fruit and slipped into his mouth. He whistled, and again another came, and so for many hours, to the great delight of the sultan. And when the sultan had seen enough, then he gave his portrait as a present to the messenger of the Old Man, with his autograph underneath, and dismissed him. Then Wyvell mounted his horse and galloped to the coast.

In the meantime his men had been on the watch, and they waylaid the convoy, and fell on them with ivory knitting-pins, and slew and dispersed them, carried off Clarionas, and set her in their vessel, and only awaited the arrival of Wyvell to set sail.

It must now be told how that Generides was out making the circuit of the frontiers of Persia to see that all the loadstones were in order, when there came to him his faithful friend and servant, Nathaniel, in hot haste, to say that he had seen Mirabell running from near the sea, and she had declared that her mistress had been carried off by men armed only with ivory weapons.

Now when Generides heard this, he knew that he had been outwitted, and he hasted down to the sea-shore, but arrived there only in time to see the sails of the vessel as she departed, bearing away his loved Clarionas to the Old Man of the Mountain.

Then he knew that no time was to be lost; so he got a ship and a crew, and he sped out to sea in pursuit. And after he had sailed some days, he saw

bearing down a noble vessel filled with armed men, and he saluted, and asked who were in the ship and whither she was bound. Then he heard a great cry, and lo! his own mother was on deck; she was with Auferus, his father, and they were on their way to Syria to reconquer his realm for Auferus.

Then Generides told how that he was in pursuit of Clarionas, and that for his happiness it was necessary that he should win her. So Auferus and Sereine joined with him, and they sailed towards the territory of the Assassins.

But Generides knew that he must use subtlety. Therefore he did not cast anchor near to that territory, but disembarked at some distance, in the port of Ptolemais, in Syria; and he bade his father go on and meet the upstart Ameloc, whilst he went in quest of Clarionas. Then he took the juice of a herb, and smeared therewith his face and hands, and he was then like unto a leper.

Also he put on him old and ragged garments, and took a clapper in his hand, even as do lepers. Then he went alone to the palace of the Old Man of the Mountain in Lebanon. Now it was so, that the King of the Assassins had proclaimed his marriage with Clarionas, and there was to be a great feast, to last three days and three nights.

Clarionas was very sorrowful, and she wept bitterly and prayed to God, and what she had with her she gave in alms, and she asked of the poor and the

suffering to entreat God's mercy that she might be delivered.

And it so chanced that one day there came a leper, sounding his clapper and beseeching alms.

Then Clarionas beckoned him to draw nearer, and he came forward, and she filled a goblet with wine, and bade him drink and take with him the goblet.

And as he drank she saw upon his finger the ring she had given to Generides; thereat her colour changed. Thereupon she dismissed her maids, for that she said she would speak alone with the leper. And when they were together, she asked him instantly whence got he the ring.

And Generides told her all, and bade her escape that night, and he would have horses ready, and they would ride to the sea and cross it.

Then hastily he went away, rattling his clapper, and she remained, and considered what she should do. There was then in the garden a laundress, and she was washing the linen of Clarionas against her marriage. To her the princess confided all, and the laundress agreed to assist her to escape. So that evening, when the feast had begun, she arrayed Clarionas in mean garments, and bade her take the basket with the linen in it, and follow her. So the laundress went first, and the princess after.

But as they came nigh the door there stood Wyvell, and he stopped the laundress, and asked, "Whom hast thou with thee?"

The laundress answered, "Thou art an impudent varlet to stay my maid. Do you think I can both wash the linen and also carry the basket?"

She thrust forward; then Wyvell put forth his hand to raise the veil of Clarionas; but the laundress stayed him, and said, "Foul befall thee, thou recreant and ungentle knight, to put forth thy hand and raise the veil, though it be only of a washerwoman's maid."

So Wyvell desisted, and both women passed out. Then they went to the garden wall, and there was Generides with the horses, and he mounted Clarionas behind him, and Nathaniel took the laundress behind him, and they rode away.

Now Wyvell bethought him that it was a strange thing that on this only occasion had the laundress a maid with her; and when there arose a great cry in the palace that the princess was lost, then he made sure that she had been carried off in disguise with the privity of the laundress.

Therefore he pursued in hot haste, and he was nigh on those who fled, but he was alone on his horse.

Now Clarionas cried out that they were being pursued. Then Generides alighted off his horse and drew his sword, and knelt, and Wyvell galloping on, and regarding nothing, ran his horse upon the sword of Generides, and the horse was pierced to the heart, and reeled and fell, and threw Wyvell. Thereat Generides leaped up and smote off his head.

Now when he and Clarionas came to the waterside, there he washed his face, and his skin was fresh and white again. Also great was his joy, for no sooner was it known that Auferus was landed than all the people of Syria rose against Ameloc, who had proved a very tyrant, and slew him. And they welcomed their rightful king with acclamations. And after that did all go to the chief city, and there was exceeding joy, and Generides was married to his beloved Clarionas.

Thenceforth Auferus ruled wisely and well. He had learned by bitter experience that there were duties to be performed by a man, and that he must not neglect his duties to follow after pleasure.

The king shook his head. "There is a moral to this story," said he, "therefore I do not like it."

But the gentle and sweet Noyalen stole on tip-toe to Jeremiah and whispered, "Therefore I *do* like it."

And he thought that was the best return he could have had for his story. But he was to receive something more.

Noyalen took the gold cup and shook over it the tufts of flowered gorse, now heavy with dew, and they dropped their moisture into it. Then she dipped her finger-tips in the chalice and flipped a few clear drops in his face.

At once he felt a change there, but what it was he could not tell. He passed his hand over his features,

and found that something there was other from what had been before, but what that was he knew not.

Then Noyalen brought the golden cup to him and bade him look therein, and, lo! the crystal dew there collected served as a mirror, and he saw himself reflected as in a glass, and his face had become youthful as of old.

Full of gladness of heart, and with a more confident look at the princess, he began the tenth story.

X.

SIR CLEGES

THE course of life is as the turning of a wheel, or as a see-saw. Now you are up and to-morrow are down, and he that is bottom-most will shortly soar high aloft, and let him be shrewd when aloft to keep his head and not fall.

In the days of Pendragon, father of King Arthur, there was at his court a right honourable and gallant knight, whose name was Cleges. He was tall, well built, and of fair hair and very bright blue eyes.

Now Cleges did his duty by the king, and then, instead of remaining at the court doing nothing but dancing and perfuming himself, and saying pretty or smart things, he returned to his home, for he was happier there than anywhere else in the world. He loved his people on his land, and he loved his land, but above all he loved his wife. She was a good and gentle woman, and gracious to everyone, rich or poor. Dearly Cleges and his wife loved each other. He was generous to all, and so was she; and they were both entirely content to live far from the envy and revelry of a court

among their own people, and find happiness in each other, and in the sports of the field, and in the cultivation of a garden of herbs and sweet flowers.

There lacked in Cleges but one thing, and that was a sound judgment, to know when to stay his hand. He was ready to give to all who asked, and his wife never ventured to say to him—Be less liberal, for thou art becoming prodigal.

Moreover, they kept open house, and whosoever passed that way received there good entertainment. Every year at Christmas they made a great feast in honour of the festival of Christ's birth of a pure maiden.

"As royal in everything,
As if that he had been a king,
To none would he say Nay.
Minstrels were not behind,
For there they mirth did find,
There gladly would tarry they.

"And when the feast was done,
Without good gifts went away none,
Beside their ale and food.
Horses, and robes, and costly rings,
Gold, silver too, and other things,
That suited to their mood."

Now it may well be supposed that a man of so free a hand and large a heart would in time come to penury. No fortune would endure such extreme generosity — we may say prodigality. And so it was that the estate of the good knight Cleges was

lessened; moreover losses came on him for which he was not accountable. But this he ought to have weighed, that evil days come on most men, and that a lesson may and ought to be taken from the ant that lays by against the winter.

When Sir Cleges was no longer able to entertain as afore, then his friends drew away from him. No more did the minstrels come to his castle and harp on their harps and sing merry ballads.

So he and his wife and children lived in great straits, and with hardly an attendant in the castle, which itself fell into ruin; and the grass grew in the courts, and the wild wallflowers started out of the joints between the stones. One day the good knight saw a pretty pink blossom crowning the decaying walls, and he laughed and said to his wife, "See, that is *Thrift*. It comes on our ruin; would that we had it in our hearts in the days of prosperity."

The slates of the roof were carried away by gales, and let through the rain.

Now it befell on Christmas Even that the king summoned to a great entertainment at Cardiff, where he then abode. And he went forth hunting, and his hawk was on his wrist. Then he unhooded it and sent up the falcon on high — and the bird flew away and he saw it no more. Thereat King Uthyr was sore aggrieved, because that was his best hawk, and he loved the bird

greatly; and he issued a proclamation that whosoever found the hawk should bring it to him at Cardiff, and he should be largely rewarded.

Now it came to pass that same day, that Cleges, looking forth from a broken window, saw minstrels and knights wending their way to Cardiff with much mirth, and all gaily accoutred. And not one turned in at his gate and saluted him. Moreover, he knew that he had no palfrey and no knightly accoutrements befitting his rank, so that he could not go to Cardiff.

And as he walked upon the ground,
Sore sighing, then he heard a sound
Of pleasant minstrelsy.
Trumpets, and pipes, and twitt'ring flutes,
Of chiming harps, and pleasant lutes,
And of the psaltery.

On every side he heard men sing,
And silver bells on bridles ring,
As on their way they went.
Sir Cleges wrung his hands to think
That he should stand on ruin's brink,
These all on pleasure bent.

And as he stood in mourning so,
His good wife unto him did go
With smiles, as she were glad.
She kissèd him, and said, "My dear
Sweet lord, I pray be of good cheer,
And be not all so sad."

She bade him come within and eat what meat

they had in the house, and make merry with the children, who, with their pretty ways, were good sport.

With their children play they did,
And after supper went to bed
When it was time of night;
And on the morrow went to church—
God's service not left in the lurch—
As it was reason and right.

Now when divine service was done, then Sir Cleges walked in his garden, and sad thoughts came over him once more.

As he walked, he passed under a cherry tree, and to his great marvel, not only were there green leaves on the cherry tree, but ripe fruit as well—just as in June; yet was the time winter, and the day the Feast of Christmas.

As he stood full of wonder, looking into the cherry tree, he heard a bird flutter, and he saw that in the tree sat a falcon—a finer bird he never had seen. And the bird was plucking at the cherries.

Then Sir Cleges took his glove, and softly approached, and drew his glove over the head of the bird, or ever it was aware, and so caught it.

Now when he had done this, then he brake a branch of the cherry tree on which were green leaves and a bunch of seven ripe cherries all together, and he seated the falcon on the branch and conveyed it within.

So when his wife saw this, then was she glad, and she said :—

"To-morrow, when the day doth spring,
You shall to Cardiff to the king,
And give him this," she said.
"Then such a gift you may have there
That we shall better fare this year
Than in the past that's sped."

To this Cleges agreed.

On the morrow early he started, and had his eldest son with him. They went together towards Cardiff, and the knight held the branch of fruited cherries whereon sat the beautiful bird. He had no horse, and was fain to walk and assist his steps with a staff.

When Cleges and his boy reached the palace of the king, then the knight walked up the steps to the grand hall, as he was wont to do in former days, and to enter by the great doorway.

But now he was in poor, homespun array, and the porter repelled him, and said, "You churl, get you gone at once! This is no place for you."

Then the good knight said, "I pray you, let me in, for I am taking to the king a present of ripe, red cherries in mid-winter, and of a falcon, the which I think he must have lost, for there is a gold circlet round the neck, on which is graven a dragon displayed. If this be a bird of his, he will give me a great reward for having recovered it."

The porter now looked at the branch with the ripe cherries. They made his mouth water. And he took two of the seven, and ate them himself. As to the falcon, he knew that it belonged to the king; so he said to Sir Cleges, "Very well, I will let you pass, but only on one condition—that you give me one third of the reward which the king grants you. Consent to this, or you do not pass at all."

Sir Cleges said, "I assent."
He let him through. In he went
Without more delay.
In he went at a great pace,
The usher within the door was,
And him with staff did stay.

The usher threatened to strike the knight for entering without his leave, and he said, "Go back, churl, or I will thrash you black and blue, and send you away crying."

"Good sir," said Sir Cleges, "I pray, be not so fierce with me. I have brought a present of ripe cherries to the king, and I have found a bird that I believe is his, and which I would restore to him. For this he will give me a reward."

Now when the usher saw the ripe cherries, he lusted after them, and took two himself. Then he said, "Fellow, I will suffer you to pass, but on one condition only—that you give me one third of the reward granted you by the king."

Then said Sir Cleges, "I agree," and so passed on into the hall.

The steward walked there withal
Among the lords within the hall,
Robed in rich weed.
"Churl," he said, "thou art too bold!
Withdraw thee in thy clothes old
Smartly, I thee rede (advise)."

Then answered the knight, "Good sir, I have here a present for your master and mine, even red cherries at Christmas, and what is more, a rare falcon."

Then the steward plucked two of the cherries, and put them into his mouth; and he knew the bird to be that of the king, which had been lost for some while, so he spoke less roughly, and said, "Fellow, you may go on and offer the present, but only on condition that I receive one third of what the king orders shall be given you in reward."

Sir Cleges bethought him then,
"My part is small between these men,
I shall in sooth have naught;
For my labour shall I not get
More than a mouthful of good meat";
Thus, sighing sore, he thought.

But as he could get no further without he assented, he agreed it should be as the steward had required, so was allowed to go forward.

He now walked up to the king's high table, and he presented him with the cherry-bough, on which

was now one single cherry; for the porter, the usher, and the steward had eaten the rest.

But the king was rejoiced, and he took the twig with the one ripe fruit on it, and said, "I will not eat it myself, but I will send it to the fair lady out of Cornwall, my wife, and it will give her great pleasure."

Right glad was he to receive the falcon, which had been lost for many days, and he said to Sir Cleges, "Good man, ask a reward, and it shall be given you, if so be that there be naught immoderate therein."

Then Cleges said:—

"Grammercy, liege king,
This is to me right comforting,
I tell you in verity.
But to have houses and land,
Or golden pieces in hand,
That is too much for me.

But in that I may choose,
Give me twelve lusty blows
To deal as it liketh me.
With my staff to pay them all,
Whom I will in this hall.
Grant it in charity."

King Uthyr Pendragon was much surprised. He laughed and said, "I repent me of my grant. Take instead houses and land and a gold fee in hand."

But Sir Cleges held to what he had demanded, and as the king had passed his word, he could not withdraw it.

Sir Cleges went into the hall,
Among the lords great and small,
  Without any words more.
He sought after the proud steward,
For to give to him his reward,
  Because he had grieved him sore.

He gave the steward such a stroke
That he fell down like a block,
  All the company before.
And after, he gave him other three,
Who cried, "Sir, of your courtesy,
  Smite me no more!"

He went to the usher in haste,
Saying, "You also strokes shall taste,
  As is both fit and meet."

He caught the usher by his neck, and he dealt him such heavy blows that he could not fulfil his duties for two days after that.

"There," said Cleges, "now you have a third part of my recompense. I have already paid the steward his third part."

Next he went to the porter, and he belaboured him as well, and said, "Now you also have received your third of the reward. I hope you are content therewith."

It was so that the king was in his parlour, and a harper was before him singing a ballad. But the king did not hearken. He was thinking of the old man who had brought him the cherry branch, and had returned to him his falcon.

There was something familiar to him in his features, and he felt confident that he had seen him before.

Then all at once King Uthyr stayed the minstrel, and said to him, "Thou hast travelled far and wide; tell me, hast thou ever seen a knight of the name of Cleges? He was wont at one time to come to my court, but I have not seen him for many years. There was somewhat in the face of that old clown who brought me the bird and the cherry bough that recalled Sir Cleges to me."

The harper replied that he knew Sir Cleges at one time full well, but that his estate had fallen to decay, and the knight himself was reduced to great poverty.

"Then by my head!" exclaimed the king, "I trow that poor man was he."

Thereupon he sent for him, and Sir Cleges came in and kneeled on one knee to the king, and told his name.

Then the king was glad, and welcomed him, and he said that he fain would know why he had made the singular request for the twelve blows.

Sir Cleges answered and told him all: how the three men had each taken two cherries, and had left but one for the king; and how they would not let him pass till he had covenanted to give to each, one third of the reward granted by the king.

The lords all laughed, as did also the king; and he

said, "This is a noble knight indeed. And as to my servants, the steward, the usher, and the porter, they have been well served, and I would that others who come to me would deal with them in like manner."

Then the king gave him lands and servants, and made him governor of the castle of Cardiff.

Now before that Sir Cleges left his ruinous home, he went up on one of the crumbling walls and plucked thence a bunch of the pink flower that is called thrift, and he took it away with him to Cardiff, and he said to his dear wife, "Let a posy of thrift be ever in my chamber before mine eyes, that I may remember to what sorrow and poverty I came in my past life *through want of thrift.* And when I am dead, then give some of these pink flowers to my sons, and tell them that the best heritage they can have, better than houses and lands and gold, is THRIFT."

The queen's lips moved; she was about to smile, when she observed a frown on the brow of her royal consort.

"This will not do," said he. "Again have you transgressed. There is distinctly a moral to this tale, and morals are what I particularly detest. No, Noyalen, he shall receive nothing for this. I shall insist on his telling us a more amusing story, or the crock of gold will most assuredly not be his."

Thereupon Mr. Toope began the eleventh tale.

XI.

HEART OF ICE

THERE were once upon a time a king and a queen who gave away everything that they had, because they were the kindest and most considerate people in the world, and could not see anyone want.

King Bamboo, a neighbour, knowing that they had exhausted their treasures, entered the country with a large army, and made himself master of it.

The poor king, having nothing left either for his defence or his sustenance, was obliged to disguise himself, and to make off on foot with the queen, his wife, who with some difficulty carried in her arms the little Conall, their only son, three years old, and very pretty. By this means they had the good fortune to escape the pursuit of King Bamboo, who would otherwise have put them to death.

In this manner they traversed wild moors and barren rocks, till after incredible fatigue they descended into a beautiful valley, through which ran a brawling stream that watered green meadows. Now the king had always been fond of fishing, and he

was wont to carry his flies and gut wound round his hat. By good fortune he had fled wearing his fishing hat, and he now found that he had the means of catching a dish of trout for supper. He made his line fast to a distaff which the queen had luckily preserved, and in a few minutes he had caught a number of fish, of which he made a good repast, for the poor folk had eaten nothing on the moors except berries and such roots as they were able to chew.

Charmed with the pleasantness of the place, they resolved to remain there. The king fashioned a hut of stones and turf, and thatched it with bracken. He gathered abundance of heather, and therewith made a good bed. Thus this little habitation seemed to them not without agreeableness. We judge all things by comparison. But something was still wanting, and that was a flock of sheep, which the queen thought she could manage very well with the little prince, whilst the king was engaged in fishing.

Indeed his Majesty continued to catch a great plenty of fish, and saw that they were of exquisite beauty, and their scales of iridescent colours. This was not all, for upon further examination he found that they were easily tamed and were eminently tractable, so much so that he easily taught them to whistle like a bullfinch and even talk like a parrot.

This discovery made him resolve to go and sell them in a city not far distant from his retreat. And this was the more necessary as the queen was deficient in groceries, and could not possibly make milk punch, of which his majesty was fond, without lemons, and lemons cost money. And money the royal couple were without.

The king accordingly went to the town, and seeing no fish in the market of that sort which he had caught, he exposed his for sale, at the same time telling the people what properties his fish possessed, and assuring them that they were very young, tractable, and capable of vast improvement. So singular a thing would have answered in any country, but in a city where luxury prevailed, he could not fail making his account of them, for everybody was eager to buy; they paid him the price he demanded, and insisted on his bringing more. In a little while these fishes became so fashionable that no people who made any pretence to be, as they termed it, "in the swim," that is, in Society, could be without them. They put the fish in crystal globes, which they hung up as we do cages, in their apartments, where their rainbow, shifting colours were most conspicuous, and such fish as had a predominant colour or tint were suited to the furniture of the room. With the money the king got for his fish he bought a flock of sheep and some lemons, so that his queen might occupy

her leisure in pasturing the former, and labour at graver periods in brewing him punch.

He soon came to consider his lot in the valley, occupied by day in fishing, and by night sipping punch, as ideally happy, and he ceased to regret the loss of his kingdom.

Years passed, and the peaceful and calm pleasures enjoyed by the queen and her royal consort did not pall on them; and as the demand for fish of the sort his majesty caught did not slacken—for they became matter of export to foreign lands—he was daily occupied in a healthy and harmless pursuit.

Meanwhile Prince Conall grew to man's estate, and as the demand for fish increased the king was wont to send his son to market with them, whilst he laboured with the line and angle.

One day, when Prince Conall was in the market place, he heard a flourish of trumpets, and saw an embassy arrive. The ambassadors mounted a platform and announced that the Princess Sable of Oowanghoo having lost her heart, which was congealed in the Mountain of Eternal Snows, her royal father proclaimed that her hand and succession to the kingdom of Oowanghoo would be assured to the man who would bring her heart to her. At the same time a picture of the princess was hoisted up, and the chief ambassador with a stick pointed out her chief points of beauty.

Prince Conall no sooner saw this beautiful picture than he fell in love with Princess Sable, and felt that no toils could be too great, no dangers excessive, if only he might win her as his bride.

He returned home to the Peaceful Vale, and informed his parents of his intention to go in quest of the heart of the Princess Sable.

Both were greatly affected, and lamented his intention, but saw that it would be in vain to dissuade him. Accordingly the king gave him a purse of coin, which he had saved from the sale of the rainbow fish, and his mother furnished him with a change of socks she had knitted out of the wool of her flock of sheep, in the event of his getting his feet wet in the course of his adventures in the quest of the heart of the Princess Sable.

With many tears they parted, and Prince Conall started. He went to the nearest seaport town, where he found a ship bound for that part of the world towards which he intended to make his way, and finding that he had enough money to pay for his passage, he embarked and sailed.

After some days at sea a violent storm arose; he suffered shipwreck, and was the only person saved, and was cast on a desert island. Happily he had preserved his socks, and on being thrown by the waves upon the shore, he had the prudence at once to sit down and change; consequently no injurious after effects followed on the shipwreck.

On the desert island he lived by the chase, and on such shell-fish and birds' eggs as he could collect.

One day, as he took a melancholy walk by the sea-side, he perceived a vessel making for the shore. He made signals to the sailors to implore their assistance, but the nearer it approached the more extraordinary it seemed, for he could not discern a living soul on board. The ship came directly on shore, and by accident struck on a sandbank, where she lay as happily as could be desired.

Now Conall examined her closely, and saw that the masts were green trees, full of leaves. Surprised at the sight, he went on board, where he found the deck grass-grown. There were men on board, alive, but in a most miserable condition, for they were covered with moss, and even ferns grew out of the chinks of their bodies.

Struck with compassion, Conall removed them one by one to the shore, where he scraped them and got all the moss off them, and healthy flesh appeared beneath this coat; he also uprooted the ferns that grew out of the ears, nostrils, corners of the mouth, and between the fingers and toes, of these unhappy people. In short, he took such pains with them that in a few days they found themselves in a condition to move and work as before.

He ascertained from the sailors that they had been becalmed off an island in the south, that was covered with woods and rank with vegetation. The wind

when it arose was but a light breath from off shore, and it carried the pollen of the plants, and with that covered the deck and clothed the masts; also as an impalpable powder it adhered to their bodies. Not being able to get water to wash this away, it had germinated, and thus it was that the ship had become as a bower, and they themselves had become moss-grown. They became quite stupid under the effect, and so stiff and unwieldy, that they could not move about.

Conall collected into a box a good deal of the powder that still lay about in the ship, thinking it might serve him some purpose at a future time.

As to the vessel, it was absolutely useless, as the masts had rooted themselves, and the fibres had completely filled the cabin and the hold, thick as matting. They had, however, produced a fruit, something like very large acorns. He plucked one of these and took it ashore, and put it in the ground. Next day he was surprised to see that during the night it had begun to germinate, and had produced a tiny little ship. This grew daily, till it was of sufficient size to put to sea in, when Conall and the sailors who were on shore became impatient to be off, and they launched the vessel and found her to be entirely seaworthy.

They now put to sea, and steered east by north-east. After a voyage of about a week they drew near to land.

When they approached they discovered several large spaniels on the coast, who seemed to be on the watch, and several others formed into troops at a distance. Those of the advanced guard came boldly to reconnoitre the vessel, and seeing that Conall made no sign of hostility, but, on the contrary, saluted them with "Good morrow to you, doggies!" they began to express content by a general barking and by wagging their tails. In the most courteous manner they offered him their paws on his landing, and seemed to invite him to follow them, and abandon himself to their conduct.

They easily made him understand that they were indisposed to repose the same confidence in his sailors. Curiosity determined Conall to follow them; he therefore ordered his people to wait for him a fortnight, after which time, if he did not reappear, they were to continue their voyage.

Then he abandoned himself to the guidance of the good animals, and about half a mile from the coast he discovered a large village. Before he arrived he was met by several carriages, drawn by other animals, but driven by dogs. He was much surprised at the culture of the land, and to see everywhere tokens of industry and ease, and that without perceiving any other inhabitants except dogs. They gave him refreshments in the village whilst they put a pair of horses to a chaise, which was driven by a large spaniel.

Conall travelled in this manner some twelve miles, till he reached a large city. He could not doubt but that it was the metropolis, for all the inhabitants were at the gates, or on the walls, or lining the streets. It was evident that he was expected, and that this was the object of his destination.

Conall was infinitely pleased with the acclamations and caresses of the dogs, and the tokens of welcome and of pleasure that they manifested at his arrival.

He arrived at a palace, and was led to a great court through which he passed among a great many dogs all shorn, and each had whiskers, and most of them pipes in their mouths, much like performing dogs in circuses. He passed through them into the palace, where he was received by the king, seated on a Persian carpet, surrounded by a number of poodles, who whisked the flies off him. He was a beautiful spaniel, with very intelligent eyes and something noble and dignified in his manner. After a ceremonious introduction, the king made a sign to all the attendants to retire, and calling to him a secretary of state, dictated to him a compliment, signifying how sorry he was not to be able to converse with Conall in his language, but only in that of dogs. He could, however, by the aid of his secretary, have his words translated and written in the language of men, but owing to the canine formation of his secretary's mouth, the latter, though he could write the language, could not speak it.

Conall made a proper reply, and after some compliments, begged the king to satisfy his curiosity concerning everything he saw surprising in his court and kingdom. This request recalled some melancholy reminiscences in the king, but after he had taken a little time to recover himself, he told him (still by the means of his secretary) that he was called Wow; that a fairy had been enamoured of his person, and had used all methods to engage him to love and espouse her, but that he could never bring himself to do so; and that at last, the love of the fairy being turned to fury, she had transformed him into the condition of a dog, in which he was to remain, deprived of the use of human speech, and she had even extended her cruelty to his subjects.

Conall was much affected by this discourse, and protested that there was nothing he would not undertake to oblige so amiable a prince, and to draw him out of his deplorable state. But Wow told him that he had no resource, for that the fairy had said to him at the instant of his change, "Go! bark, and be covered with hair, till such time as the mountain of ice be dissolved in which I have placed the heart of the Princess Sable."

"But," exclaimed Prince Conall, "it is I that am in quest of that mountain, for I most fervently desire to obtain the love of that princess, and I know but too well that she can never love me till her heart is released from the icy fetters in which it is now bound."

"If that be so," said the dog king, "then her recovery and mine will alike be the object of your quest. I will help you by every means at my disposal. Command me when in need. Here is a whistle; put that to your lips when you desire assistance, and my dogs will fly to your aid."

Conall returned to the seashore, when to his dismay he found that the vessel had left. The ungrateful mariners, in their impatience to return to the bosoms of their families, would not wait the fortnight stipulated for his return.

The dogs, seeing his distress and his earnest desire to be off, found an open boat, the only vessel they could procure. Into that he went and rowed out to sea. He rowed till overcome with fatigue, when he rested on his oars. He was already out of sight of land.

As he rested, a number of flying-fish passed over his bark, but some of the fish dropped into the boat. Almost immediately an albatross that had been following the movements of the fish swooped down to snatch those from the boat that had fallen into it. Prince Conall seized the immense bird by the legs and held it. The albatross made desperate efforts to escape, but these were in vain. She tried to rise in the air, but could not lift the prince and the boat out of the water. She then plied her wings vigorously, and by this means drew the boat along through the sea at a prodigious rate, so that the water foamed up

over the bows. At how many knots an hour she sailed is unrecorded.

At last land hove in view, and Conall saw that it was a country quite unknown to him.

He now released the bird, that immediately soared on high and disappeared.

Conall went on shore, and found that he was not in a country inhabited by dogs. The country was, however, frightfully barren ; it was, in fact, one vast rocky desert. Only here and there did plants grow out of cracks in the rocks, and it was on the fruit and grain of these plants that the miserable inhabitants lived. They had no fields; there was, in fact, no soil at all, and every single plant that grew had its roots in solid rock.

Conall asked the natives how it was that they obtained a livelihood from such a soil. They told him that they would infallibly perish of destitution if it were not for the moorhen. This bird knew where schamir was, a tiny stone which, when laid on rock, split it. When they desired to sow their crops they watched for the moorhen and observed where she had her nest. Then they placed a sheet of glass over the nest ; and as the bird was unable to sit on her eggs till the glass was broken, she flew away, found the mysterious stone, and brought it in her beak to the nest, laid it on the plate of glass, and it was at once shattered to pieces.

Then those who had been watching raised a great

shout, and kindled and waved torches, and so frightened the bird that she flew away and let drop the stone, which they at once picked up. This stone they then applied to the rocks and it split them, and where split, there they dropped the seed of the plants they cultivated.

Every family was by this means provided with a stone, the schamir, which was treasured. But no young people could marry and set up a household till one of them was provided with a schamir, wherewith to break up a rock that was allotted to each householder on which to grow sufficient grain and berries to sustain a family.

Conall was extremely interested at what he heard, and desired greatly to possess one of these stones. But the inhabitants were most reluctant to part with them. However, at last he heard of a family that had died out without children, and the nearest relatives, for the sake of a pinch of the fertilising dust that the prince gave them out of his box, agreed to surrender the stone. This he now carefully put away and continued his journey. He had received a direction from the people who lived in Rockland as to his course to the land where reigned the father of Sable. It was due north of where he then found himself, consequently he no longer needed his boat. They furnished him with an intelligent guide, from whom he acquired much useful information.

His guide described to him the habits and nature of the moorhen. This bird is of a peculiarly warm temperament; indeed, so warm that she has been known to revivify her eggs even after they have been addled. Occasionally she has been long from her nest, kept away on account of the obstruction placed there by those who want to obtain schamir, and she has had to fly in quest of the stone; and again, when she had split the glass, may have been frightened away by the cries of the people and waving of torches—then, naturally, the eggs left for so long a time become addled. Nevertheless, so warm is the bosom of the bird and so ardent her maternal affection, that she cuddles down on the eggs, and with the heat actually restores to them the life that had been chilled out of them.

This very remarkable fact interested Conall extremely, and he desired greatly to obtain one of these birds and test the heat developed by maternal solicitude. He had not with him at the time a thermometer for taking temperatures, but he resolved on buying one as soon as he was able.

His guide assured him that he could catch a moorhen for him. The way to do this was to find a nest, remove the eggs, and put pebbles in their place. Then the bird sat so hard on these stones that nothing could induce her to leave them.

On the journey, most happily, the guide was able by this means to secure a moorhen. Conall

clipped her wings, and taught her to sit on his shoulder; and she became quite tame because he set the nest with the pebbles in it upon his shoulder, and the bird would on no account leave them.

However, after a while this became inconvenient, for the heat of her body penetrated through the nest and his clothing, and made his shoulder disagreeably hot. But by this time he had reached the land of the father of Princess Sable, and he was able to put the nest in a room of his lodgings.

Prince Conall now changed his socks—he had nothing else he could change—and demanded an interview with the king. This was granted to him. He was graciously received, but was informed that the king was just then in great straits, for his territories were invaded by a neighbour called Arogant, at the head of a large army, and he implored Conall to join in the defence of the land and of his throne.

Conall cheerfully did so, and at once hastened to the troops of the king. He found them few in number compared with those of the enemy, and destitute in cavalry. Arogant deemed his victory certain, indeed everything seemed to promise it; the ardour of his troops, the superiority of his forces, and above all his splendid cavalry.

However, no sooner was the signal for an engagement given, than Conall drew out his whistle and

blew. Thereupon a thousand dogs appeared on the scene, and at once jumped on the cruppers of all the horses of Arogant's cavalry. By this means, they not only threw the whole squadron into disorder by frightening the horses, but also getting at the throats of the riders from behind, they precipitated them from their saddles, and the steeds, riderless and mad with terror, turned and plunged through the ranks of the infantry, throwing them into such utter confusion that, when the signal to charge was sounded in the army of the father of Sable, that host rushed forward, dispersed and annihilated the enemy. Arogant was taken captive, and conducted in chains to the palace of the father of Princess Sable, but unable to support the sudden turn his fortunes had taken, he expired of mortification on his arrival at the foot of the throne.

After this victory the dogs disappeared, and Conall returned with the army to be received in the capital with triumphal acclamations.

The king now allowed him an interview with Sable. He found her to be singularly beautiful, very accomplished, but absolutely heartless.

"Oh," said the princess, "you are one of my suitors, I suppose. There have been twenty-eight already."

"Where are they now?" asked Conall.

"I cannot answer for all," replied Sable. "One, I know, was eaten by polar bears after they had

hugged him to death; two were frozen to death; one was crossing a crevasse in a glacier, and slipped and fell in, and he went down. They tell me that it will be at least a century before his body is disgorged by the glacier. Some have turned and gone home, frightened at the dangers of the journey. One had his ears and nose frost-bitten, and they mortified and fell off; so he is disfigured for life. One was attacked by a pack of wolves, and they ate him, bones and all; and it would not have been known but that they left some of his buttons with the crest on them. Two princes, very nice young men in their way, went together, but their provisions fell short, and they ate each other, and nothing, not even buttons, was left of either of them."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Conall.

"Yes, I daresay it was."

"And do you feel no remorse at causing the death of so many nice young men?"

"No! Why should I? They take their chance."

"And you will not concern yourself greatly if I perish as well?"

"I shall not concern myself at all. It is your concern, not mine. If you don't like it, don't go. No one forces you."

Prince Conall was quite shocked at the callousness of Sable. But he considered that she had no heart, and could not help it.

Whilst he was talking with her, there arrived a deputation from the portion of the land ravaged by King Arogant. They waited on the king to inform him of the destitution of the people. The enemy had burnt the villages and destroyed the harvest. The poor peasants had nothing on which to sustain themselves during the winter that was coming on, and no hovels even to shelter them from the cold.

"It would be the best thing, father," said the princess, "to have them all mown down with grape-shot or poisoned off. That is the simplest and readiest way to solve the difficulty. You see that, obviously, when the sufferers have been got rid of the misery will end."

However, his Majesty and the council would not hear of this device. Princess Sable thought that they managed very stupidly when they chose to send waggons of food and clothing to the starving people, and supplied them with ranges of galvanised and corrugated iron sheds in which to spend the winter. Presently the mistress of the robes entered to inform the princess that the needlewomen engaged on her new ball dresses had worn several of their fingers to stumps with the hard work set them.

"Are all their fingers worn down?" she asked.

"No, your royal highness; not all."

"Then," said Sable, "keep the girls till all their fingers are reduced to stumps, and then chuck them away."

"Chuck what away?" asked Conall, greatly shocked.

"Chuck the workwomen away. They will be no good to anyone, and, having no fingers, will not be able to work for their living; so chuck them away into the ashpit."

"But this is most dreadful!" exclaimed Conall.

"Why so?" asked the princess in surprise. "When I have got a broken needle I throw it away; why not a worn-out needlewoman?"

Conall would have declined to prosecute his search after the heart of the princess, but that his honour was engaged; and, moreover, he was under the fascination of her beauty.

When he had resolved on starting, he blew his whistle, whereupon a team of dogs appeared, and, as he had purchased a sledge, he started over the snows due north to the mountains of ice, to obtain, if he could, the frozen heart of the princess.

At some distance beyond the last village within the realms of the king, he found himself on a vast snow-covered plain, and here he at once equipped the sledge. He had brought with him his box with the vegetative powder, the stone schamir, and the nest with the moorhen sitting in it hard on the pebbles, which she was vainly endeavouring to hatch.

He had forty-eight dogs, and these he attached to the sledge. The immensity of snow had a sort of beauty in itself, but it was a beauty full of horror. Glittering in the sky, indicating the direction to be

taken, was the Polar Star. As yet no signs of a mountain could be seen. In the sledge was stacked an immense heap of dried herrings, intended to serve as food for the dogs. But it was not till Conall had been for some hours careering over the snow that it occurred to him that he had brought no grain of any sort wherewith to feed the moorhen.

After a long journey of seventeen hours the dogs were much exhausted, and Conall deemed it expedient to halt.

And now he scattered some of the powder from his casket on the snow. At once the snow melted, and the ground underneath appeared, and speedily became clothed in verdure. This was most satisfactory, for now in the herbage the moorhen was able to pick up a subsistence. This she did with feverish haste, and then hurried back to the pebbles to sit on them before they became cold.

The night was spent in the herbage, and as under the snow lay sticks and faggots, Conall collected these into a heap and lighted them, and enjoyed a pleasant fire. The dogs were fed on herrings, and then curled up and went to sleep.

Conall continued his journey for several days. Sometimes the sky was glorious with aurora borealis. The cold was intense, but he was well clothed, and some of the heat of the moorhen communicated itself to him; for he always carried the nest in his bosom, and the bird never left the nest

except when he halted, and then she snatched a mouthful of food and was back again. Conall began to observe with serious dread the failure of his provisions. Forty-eight dogs eat a great many fish. Already the heap had diminished to a handful, when a brilliant idea occurred to him. Whilst the moorfowl was engaged picking up grain and worms, he hastily substituted a herring's roe for a couple of the pebbles, and he was agreeably pleased to find in the morning that the moorhen had hatched out all the eggs in the roe, to the number of a hundred million. This was, of course, more than the sledge and team could carry, and the pack of dogs was regaled with as many fish as they could eat, and the rest thrown away. But Conall always reserved a few herrings with hard roes, and took them along with him, and proceeded to hatch them out, with the assistance of the moorhen, at each night station.

At length before his eyes rose the Mountain of Ice. On the way, at intervals, he passed congealed princes and other adventurers, who had essayed to find and get back the heart of the princess, and had failed. The rigour of the cold had perfectly preserved them, and the features of the frozen men might be seen expressing the emotions of despair or distraction of mind they were in at the instant of congelation. When Conall reached the mountain, as it was perfectly clear crystal ice throughout, he saw into its depths, and perceived a minute speck

in the middle. This, he had no doubt, was the heart of the princess.

Although exceedingly impatient to possess it, he tarried the night, encamped at the foot of the mountain, melted a patch of snow, and produced herbage with the vegetative powder, and lit a fire, beside which he slept through the night.

Next morning early he rose and applied schamir to the Mountain of Ice, when at its touch it was shattered into tens of thousands of fragments, and walking amidst these fragments he went direct to the middle where was the heart. This he took up, wrapped it in his pocket-handkerchief, and carefully preserved it. It was, however, so deadly cold that his kerchief was frozen about it as hard as a board.

Having gone back to his equipage, he returned by the same road, and picking up the frozen men on the way, he passed a rope about them, and stacked them like a faggot on his sledge, and so brought all he could find back to the first village on the frontier, where, the temperature being mild, they gradually thawed and came to life again.

Ever and anon Conall looked at the heart of the princess, but it had lain so long and so deep in the Mountain of Ice that it showed no sign of softening.

At length he arrived at the capital, and asked for an audience.

This was accorded him, and he was introduced to the king and the princess.

As soon as Sable saw him, she said, "Oh! you are back again."

"Yes," answered Conall. "Are you glad?"

"I don't care one way or another," was the indifferent reply. "Have you found my heart?"

"Yes; it is here," said he, producing the heart and placing it on the table.

The king touched it, but it was so cold that it took the skin off the tips of his fingers, and he drew back with an exclamation.

"It will be worse than before," said he, "if that frozen lump be introduced into her bosom."

"Let us see what can be done," said the prince. Then he brought forth the nest with the moorhen sitting on the pebbles with her usual assiduity and intentness of purpose.

"She has eaten nothing for a day," said Conall. "Will your Majesty be so good as to procure an earthworm or some berries, and lay them on the table?"

The king gave the necessary command, and these articles were produced.

No sooner did the hungry bird perceive these delicacies than she jumped off the nest and hastened to them.

Whilst her back was turned Conall surreptitiously removed the pebbles and placed the heart of the

princess in the nest. With the utmost rapidity the moorhen gobbled up the food provided for her, and then returned to her nest.

The heart struck a chill into her as she seated herself on it, and she got up, turned round, and looked at it. But if it puzzled her, it also gratified her, for she thought it a prodigiously fine egg, if a cold one, and she clapped herself down on it and sat hard, with the utmost conscientiousness. In less than an hour the heart was thawed, and began to throb. Those looking on could discern this, for every pulsation of the heart made the hen move. The lively beating of the heart under her perplexed the hen, and she got up, turned herself about, and looked at what she had been sitting on. Its appearance was to her so extraordinary and so unexpected that she remained staring at it in silent astonishment.

The prince hastily took the heart up and handed it to Sable, who clasped it to her bosom, and in an instant by some mysterious means it had returned to its proper position inside her.

"Oh, the poor, poor bird!" exclaimed the princess. "Do observe the distress it is in. The hen thinks that she has been robbed of the fruit of so much labour, I mean of so long a setting. Quick! I have some young peachicks; run and fetch them, and perhaps the moorhen will be comforted at seeing them, and will believe she has hatched them out."

And in fact the bird was running about the room in a distracted manner, searching in all directions, under buffets, chiffonniers, and sofas, for that which it supposed had been hatched out under her.

The prince and the king and queen were charmed at this evidence of sensibility in the princess, and wept tears of joy.

"Why do you weep?" asked Sable. "Oh, my father! oh, my mother! you rack my heart with distress to see those tears."

Then she looked with an expression full of tenderness at Conall and said, "What sufferings, what perils you must have undergone for my sake! Oh, I was never worthy of it."

"Madam," said he, "if I had had a hundred lives I would have sacrificed them with joy to be able to see you as you are now."

Just then a great uproar was heard without, and courtiers rushed in greatly excited to say that all the dogs that had been in the retinue of Conall had been transformed into men, and desired to enter and pay their respects to the prince, who by recovering and restoring to the princess her congealed heart, had also been the means of breaking the spell that had been laid upon them and on their master.

The king was so delighted that he at once determined to abdicate and surrender his throne to his daughter, who was to be married forthwith to Conall.

"But where are your parents?" asked Sable. "Surely we must send post-haste to convey to them the glad news that their son has achieved the object of his journey and is in health."

Conall was delighted at this new token of her sensibility.

Then she added: "There have been some poor needlewomen who have worked their fingers down to stumps in my service. What can be done for them? I shall never be happy unless they are provided for."

Conall said that he had little doubt that the vegetative powder would make the fingers grow again.

"And there are a number of unhappy people whose harvests have been destroyed, and who are left unprovided and in despair," said the Princess.

"Some of the vegetative powder will restore and redouble the harvests," said Conall.

"And those poor fellows who ventured and lost their lives for my sake in the snows?"

"Such as were not eaten by wolves or hugged by bears I have brought back and thawed," said Conall.

Was there ever such a transformation? Conall felt that though he might have married a heartless princess he could never have been happy with her; but now that he had won one with a tender, beating, and sympathetic heart, he knew that his happiness

was secure. And if one thing more were needed to make their felicity complete, it was to see the pride and exultation of the moorhen, which strutted about with three young peachicks after her, and believed implicitly that she had hatched them all out through her great internal warmth.

This story made the queen laugh till the tears ran down her cheek. She broke out into laughter first when she heard how puzzled the poor moorhen was when it got up and looked at the heart beating in the nest. But when afterwards she heard of the moorhen being deluded into believing that it had hatched out peachicks, then she laid her head laughing on her husband's shoulder.

The king was highly pleased, and he made a sign to Noyalen to give the crock of gold to the schoolmaster. But Mr. Toope was a man of a noble and free temperament, and he waved it back:—

"No, sir!" said he; "not yet. I have told you eleven stories. One more will make the dozen. If that please you as well as the last, then give me the cup of gold and let me depart."

"Very well," said the king; "so be it."

Thereupon Mr. Toope began the twelfth and last tale.

XII.

BRAINS-IN-HIS-TOES

THERE was once a lad who was so stupid that everyone said that he thought with his toes.

He never was able to look ahead and see what would be the consequences of any act he did; if he were given a command, he fulfilled it without a thought as to what was the purpose of him who gave the command, and what was the object that would be attained by his obeying.

One day his master, who was in the house, and who was a farmer, said to the boy, "Go and put the horses into the waggon." So he went out, and got first one horse, and he whipped it, and tried to make it jump into the waggon; but he could do no more than make the beast plant his fore-hoofs on the back of the cart.

His master came out of the house and saw what he was about, and he took the whip to his shoulder, and said, "Brains-in-your-Toes, acting like a fool again! Harness the horses. I have a heavy load of sand to take, and I must have four—two behind and two in front."

Then he went into the house again, and the boy brought out the four cart-horses; and he harnessed two to the front of the waggon, and two to the back.

Now when his master saw what he had done he was so angry that he drove him away.

"Go," said he, lashing him unmercifully with the whip, "go where folk want fellows like you, who have brains, not in their heads, but in their toes."

So he went away, crying heartily, for he did not know where to get his supper, and he had not the smallest idea how to earn his daily bread. He walked on till the sun set, and he seated himself on a bank and waited, hoping that his meal would come to him, as he did not know whither to go to get a meal.

When night had set in the moon shone pale and bright, and Brains-in-his-Toes was bathed in the beautiful clear rays of the moon.

Now, without thinking at all, he began to twitch his forefinger and thumb, just as he saw his mother move them when she was spinning. The moonlight was about his hand, and, without thinking or knowing, he spun the moonlight in a fine silver thread.

He saw it lie like the purest metal in a coil at his feet, but he paid no attention to it till he was brought up short, finding that the moonbeam which he was twisting would not run out any more. Then he tied a

knot in it, so that it might not untwist, and, as he held the knot, all at once he felt himself being drawn on high. He did not think this was strange, he did not think whether he might fall. He did not think whither he was being drawn. His feet clutched the silver line below him, all his toes thought of was how to hold fast.

So he was pulled higher and higher, and he passed through a fine cloud.

At last he saw the moon very large above him, and presently he saw that there was a man in it; he also heard a dog bark at him; he also heard the man tell the dog to be quiet.

Next moment a rough hand laid hold of him, and he was drawn over the edge, and was in the moon.

The old man stood and looked at him. But Brains-in-his-Toes seated himself on a bundle of sticks that was there, and thought of nothing except the cold, which made his feet feel uncomfortable.

"I am glad I have got someone here at last," said the old man.

The boy looked at the man; he was dressed in a very warm coat, and he had a thick fur cap on his head. His beard was frosted, and even his long eyebrows were hoary with frost.

The Man in the Moon said, "I am tired of being here all alone, and I want to get away. I will make you a present of a thick cloak I have been knitting.

It will keep out cold and heat. And you will have no trouble in putting it on or putting it off. You have only to say, 'On,' and it will at once fit itself to your shoulders, and 'Off,' and it will at once leave you. Now, I give you this mantle, that you may go on your way in comfort till you find out how I may be released from the moon. Promise me you will come back and tell me, when you have found out."

"Yes," said the boy.

"And," continued the old man, "when you do return, I will cut for you a great round of silver from the moon, and you shall carry it home with you, and it will serve as your fortune till you die."

"Yes," said the boy.

Then the old man put a very thick, warm cloak about his shoulders, and stooped, picked up the bundle of sticks, and upset Brains-in-his-Toes in so doing, for the boy was seated on it. Then the dog began barking, and flew at his shins, and he was so frightened that he ran away and tumbled over the edge of the moon, and would have fallen to the earth and been dashed to pieces, had he not caught the moonbeam with his feet; then he grappled it with his hands, and let himself down to earth.

As soon as his feet were on the soil once more he was content, as far as he could be content on an empty stomach.

He let go the spun moonbeam and walked along.

Presently he saw a strange figure staggering along in the light of the moon.

It walked very slowly, and he was able to catch it up. Then he saw that it was really a man with an old woman hung like a chain about his neck.

"Good sir!" said the man, "will you take a tuft of grass and wipe my face? I am bathed in perspiration. I have been carrying this old woman a long way, and for a long time."

The boy was good-natured and he complied.

Then the man said, "I am the old Nick of the Mountain. I am one of those who may grow old, but can never die. I am carrying Katie, the spinster. She is a very cross old woman, snappish as a cat, and works her tongue like a flail. No one has ever asked her to marry him, for every young man is afraid of her. The other day, as I was passing her door, it was her birthday, and she was on that day forty. There was going to be a village dance, and nearly every girl of the village had been fetched away to go to the maypole, and make merry there, but no one had asked Katie to accompany him. Then she began to rail and storm, and she cried out, 'I would go, even if old Nick of the Mountain were to fetch me.' Well, I felt in a lively mood, and so I said to her, 'I am old Nick of the Mountain, will you come with me?' She jumped for joy, and hung on to my arm. I took her to the village green, and there I danced with Katie. I bought her ginger-bread,

almond-rock, and lemon-drops, and she ate and sucked to her heart's delight.

"As soon as the dancing was at an end, I said to her, 'Now, Katie, I will take you home.' 'Oh dear!' exclaimed she, 'I should like to dance with you for ever. Where do you live?'

"'Put your ear up and I will whisper.' She did so, and I told her that I was the Spirit of the Mountain, who never died, and that I lived in the heart of the granite rocks where no sun shone. 'I do not care, I will go with you,' she said, and click! round my neck she threw her arms, and I have been carrying her ever since. I do not dare to go into the granite palace of the mountains, for I should be laughed at there, bringing this old woman hanging round my neck. I have promised her silver and gold and diamonds, but it is in vain, she will not let me go. I wish you would help me."

Now, as I have already said, Brains-in-his-Toes never considered consequences. He was vastly good-natured, and he was sorry to see the poor spirit so overcome with dragging the old woman about, hung like a chain about his neck. So, without a thought, he said, "Katie! will you come to me?"

The old woman looked out of the corners of her eyes, and seeing that Brains-in-his-Toes was young and good-looking, whereas Nick of the Mountain was old and ugly, she let go her hold of the latter,

and snap! in a moment she had her arms fast round the neck of the lad, and hung there a dead weight.

Nick of the Mountain burst out laughing, and the lad now saw that having this old woman hanging to him was no laughing matter at all. Brains-in-his-Toes had now quite enough to carry, what with Katie, and what with the thick mantle given him by the Man in the Moon. In a very short time he was tired, and strove to disengage himself from his burden. In vain! Katie would listen to no remonstrances, to no entreaties. The more he struggled the tighter she clung.

Presently he came near a pool. Oh, if he could but cast her in! Then he remembered that he could easily rid himself of his mantle, and he said, "Off!"

Instantly away fell the cloak, with the old woman hanging to it, and Katie and it went together into the water.

"My best of friends," exclaimed the old Nick of the Mountain, "you have done me a great service. But for you, I might have had Katie hanging round my neck for years and years, and have been unable to release myself. Now, look you here. I will do what I can for you. What do you require?"

"I want my supper," said the lad.

"That you shall have. What more?"

"I want to tell the Man in the Moon how to escape from it."

"That I cannot tell you. It is a secret locked up in the treasury of the King of Rodesia, and to that treasury there are three keys. The chancellor keeps one, the prime minister the second, and the king has the third. Without these three keys the treasury cannot be opened and the secret disclosed. But I will tell you what I will do; being what I am, it lies in my power to repay you in my poor way for your services. I will forthwith proceed to the capital town of Rodesia and will haunt and pinch and torment the chancellor till life is a burden to him. As soon as all doctors have failed to free the chancellor from me, do you go to the town and offer, for the price of one of the treasury keys, to free the chancellor from my plaguing him. Then stand before him, say 'Hocus pocus!' and I will disappear, and torment him no more. But I will go and haunt and pinch and plague the prime minister. When all other means of cure have failed, do you offer, for the price of the second treasury key, to free the prime minister. Go to him, say 'Hocus pocus!' and I will disappear, and torment him no more. Then I will go to the king, and will plague and haunt him as I have the others. And now I warn you, beware how you venture to drive me away from the king. Should you, notwithstanding this caution, risk the attempt, I shall tear you limb from limb. You may ask, 'How am I then to get the third key?' You must use your best persuasion to induce the king to part

with it before you proceed to cure him. As soon as you have the key, go to the treasury, discover the secret you want, and then escape as best you may. But beware how you say 'Hocus pocus!' to me a third time."

The boy expressed his acknowledgment in the best and most appropriate terms of which he was master, and so the two separated, but not before a noble supper had suddenly appeared spread on the grass.

A day or two later a rumour spread that the chancellor was not quite comfortable. He was troubled with frightful dreams, he was pinched black and blue, he could attend to no business. All medicines tried failed to relieve him, and the doctors gave him up in despair.

Now Brains-in-his-Toes came to the town, and declared that he knew how to cure the chancellor. All other resources having failed, the king determined to give the boy a chance of trying what he could do.

As soon as Brains-in-his-Toes entered the room, he saw that the chancellor was in a dejected and miserable condition. Invisible hands were incessantly pinching him, pulling his hair, and flipping in his face.

Brains-in-his-Toes demanded the key to the treasury as his fee for curing him. The chancellor did not at all like to give this up, but he consented

to do so if cured, when he considered that without two other keys the treasury could not be entered.

Brains-in-his-Toes now approached the unhappy man.

"Hocus pocus!" said he in commanding tones, and with a solemn face.

Away went Nick of the Mountain, though nothing was seen; but from that moment the chancellor had ease, and he at once surrendered his key.

The young man received it and went away.

But it was soon noised abroad that something was wrong with the prime minister, and it was suspected that the same trouble which had afflicted the chancellor had fallen on the prime minister. What was to be done?

Regular practitioners were first of all applied to, but they could do nothing.

When all had failed, then Brains-in-his-Toes was sent for, and at the price of the second key to the treasury he agreed to perform a cure. Everything took place as in the former case; the cure was effected, and the youth obtained possession of the second key.

Now Nick of the Mountain struck at higher game; he pinched, tortured, haunted the monarch. As might have been expected, people were not a bit the wiser for past experience, and the doctors were sent for, and their medicines applied as in the former cases, also ineffectually.

Then they sent for Brains-in-his-Toes, but he refused to come. They sent again, but he said he would only visit the king if assured that he should have the third key. This was promised him, and, because he did not think and look forward to consequences, he was forgetful to ask to have the key before he performed the cure.

The king was in a most deplorable state, and the old Nick of the Mountain was there, behind his throne, visible to Brains-in-his-Toes.

"Ha!" exclaimed the Spirit, "did I not warn you not to attempt this cure."

"Steady," said the lad; and stealing on tiptoe to where he saw the Nick, with his hand to his mouth he whispered, "Do you think me such a fool as to attempt anything of the kind? I 've come to tell you that—that—Katie is out of the pool, and is inquiring after you!"

"Katie!" gasped Nick of the Mountain. "Then I 'm off." And he vanished.

Now the king was cured, and reluctantly he handed the third key to Brains-in-his-Toes; but he said to him—

"If you take one gold piece from my treasury, I will have your head cut off."

"I will take nothing," said the lad; "but I want to see what is within."

Then he was led to the treasury, and he unlocked the three locks with the three keys, and entered,

the king, the prime minister, and the chancellor attending him. He saw piles of gold and silver, but he did not regard them greatly; only his foot stirred a bit of paper on the floor, and he stooped to pick it up, and thereon was written, "Say Bondricasfusbos."

Brains-in-his-Toes went away, and the king for his services gave him one guinea, the prime minister gave him one shilling, and the chancellor one penny. Their gratitude would not enrich him.

He left the town and walked a long, long way, and as he went he rattled the coins in his pocket, and turned the word Bondricasfusbos in his mind.

At last, when night fell, he came to the silver coil of spun moonbeam that still lay where he had descended.

He began to climb, and directly his weight was on it, the Man in the Moon began to pull, and very soon he was being helped over the edge.

"Well," said the man, "have you found out how I am to be released?"

"Yes," answered Brains-in-his-Toes, "you must say—say—say——"

He had forgotten the word.

"Sit down on the faggot of sticks and try to recall it," said the man.

The lad seated himself, but the word was lost. He could not remember it.

Then the Man in the Moon was very angry.

"Because you have been in search of the secret, and because you have found it," said he, "I will give you a great piece of silver cut out of the moon. Come again whenever you recall it, and you shall have five times the amount—indeed, you shall have the whole silver moon all to yourself."

Then he took a great knife and cut a piece out of the moon as big as a millstone, and he scooped a hole through the middle

"Now," said he, "put your head through this hole, and you shall carry the silver down. Remember, the whole moon is yours when you recollect and tell me the word to enable me to escape."

So Brains-in-his-Toes put his head through the hole, and found the silver fitted him very tightly, and was also very heavy. As he went to the moonbeam to descend, the dog flew at his heels, and the Man in the Moon, being angry and disappointed, cried, "Bite him! bite him!"

Brains-in-his-Toes was so frightened that he fell over the edge, and went sliding down the moonbeam head foremost, for the weight about his neck made that part of him the heaviest, and when he did reach the earth he received such a bump on his head that all the brains were shaken out of his toes into his skull.

And then—immediately he recollected the word.

But now he began to consider. Suppose that he told the word to the Man in the Moon, what would

be the consequence? The man would be released, but then the moon must have some man in it to steer it along its course. Brains-in-his-Head considered that it would be advisable to let someone else take the word to the Man in the Moon.

So he went on his way.

Presently he arrived at the farm of his master with whom he had been apprenticed, and who had thrashed him so unmercifully.

"Halloo!" said the farmer, "so you are back again."

"Yes, I am back."

"Have you made your fortune?"

"It is round my neck."

"What! that collar, like a millstone?"

"It is all pure silver. It will buy a farm as big as yours."

"How did you get it?" asked the farmer.

Then Brains-in-his-Head told him all.

"And you now recollect the word?" asked the man.

"Certainly I do. It is Bondricasfusbos."

"And if the Man in the Moon is told that word, the whole moon of pure silver will be yours?"

"Yes, all."

"Then you are still Brains-in-the-Toes not to have climbed the moonbeam and told the man the word that would release him."

When the farmer had said that, he started run-

ning, and ran and ran, fearing every moment that the lad would outstrip him, till he reached the spun moonbeam; and then, full of eagerness, he laid hold of it.

At once he was drawn up, and pulled over the edge of the moon.

"Hah!" said the grey old man then, "who are you?"

"I have come to give you the word of release, and to claim the reward."

"You shall have it. What is the word?"

"Bondricasfusbos."

"Bondricasfusbos!" repeated the Man in the Moon. "And now, sir, please to take my place, and look after my dog. I am free, but you must remain. Now another word has been framed, and till that word has been discovered, and you have learned and repeated it, here you remain, and the whole silver moon is yours."

Then he bowed, said good-bye to the dog, and went over the edge of the moon.

And in the moon sits now the farmer, and there he will sit till someone finds the word of release and conveys it to him, and takes his place.

Now when Noyalen heard this story, her eyes danced and sparkled; but presently an expression of sadness came into them. She held the chalice of gold to the lips of Mr. Toope, and he tasted, and

lo! at once there ran through his arteries a flash of fire, and he felt that he was young.

The sap of life flowed freely and full through his veins, and he felt towards the beautiful fairy Noyalen an inexpressible tenderness, the like of which he had not felt before.

"The time has come," said the king of the pixies, "that we must part; I smell the breath of the morning. The crock of gold is yours; take it."

Then the schoolmaster took the vessel, but he did not look at it; he looked at the full eyes of the princess, and his heart grew heavy and sad.

She whispered to him—

"When you desire to return to us, when you find life among gross men unbearable, then go forth in the early morning, shake dew from the gorse bushes into the bowl and drink, and then——"

But he heard no more. At once it was as though smoke passed before his eyes, and he saw nothing, heard nothing, till he opened his eyes as one awakening out of a dream, and lo! the sun was rising above the hills to the east as a golden spark; he was shivering with cold, and his head was wet with dew.

He stood up and looked about him. He saw now distinctly as he had never seen before, he heard the larks trilling in the sky, his back was straight, and his legs nimble, and in his hand he held the crock of gold, smitten with the first ray of the rising sun and shining like fire.

What had been experienced was no dream. He felt that he was young again; he started to run, and he leapt a brook, then turned, sought a place where the stream formed a pool, and in it looked at his face there reflected. It was fresh and handsome. He was in verity a young man once more, but a young man very different from what he had once been.

He walked forward, singing on his way, to Tavistock, with the crock of gold concealed in his bundle.

On reaching the town, he inquired about the school, and was told that the whole body of trustees was summed up in one man—the portreeve.

To him Jeremiah Toope went, and when the portreeve saw him, he very willingly gave him the appointment, and he became schoolmaster at Tavistock.

Moreover, the portreeve was very courteous to him, and bade him dine with him as oft as he liked.

So all went smoothly for a twelvemonth; but then there came a ruffle, and the portreeve no more smiled on Mr. Toope, but bit his thumb at him, frowned, and shook his head.

This made the schoolmaster unhappy, and he plucked up courage one day to go to the portreeve's house, and inquire of him in what way he had offended.

That gentleman answered, "I will be frank with you. You owe your appointment solely to me. I

gave it you, and I expect a return. I have seven marriageable and unmarried daughters. It is altogether unreasonable and unnecessary that I should be cumbered with them all. I cannot ask of you to take to you more than one; but I do expect, seeing what are your obligations to me, that you will reduce the number on my hands to six. Take one or relinquish your position."

Mr. Toope did not speak for amazement.

Then said the portreeve, "I will order them in and make all seven pass before you. Throw your glove at her whom you choose."

He gave the requisite orders, and in ten minutes the daughters entered in file.

The first was of a sour aspect, very stiff in back and wooden in all her movements.

She passed on.

The second came in tripping and chirping "I 'd be a butterfly born in an hour."

She passed on. Mr. Toope thought her unduly frivolous.

The third was pretty, but so extremely self-conscious that her every movement was rendered uneasy through affectation.

She passed on. "Reality," said Toope, "not sham, for me."

The fourth was a slattern; her dress was burst at the seams, and the braid of her skirt hung down in a loop behind.

She passed on. Mr. Toope frowned.

The fifth was vastly ugly, and stupid withal.

"She requires drawing out," said her father.

Jeremiah was not inclined to take the trouble to do this, so he allowed her also to go forward.

The sixth was a blue-stocking; she affected to be learned, and wrote Kikero where ordinary mortals write Cicero, and could not bring herself to speak of an Anglo-Saxon King Ethelbert as other than Æthelberht, and a queen Elgiva as other than Aelfgifu.

Jeremiah turned his chair about with a sense of loathing.

The seventh was a chatterbox, but she had no other subject of talk than the delinquencies of her neighbours; she was an inveterate fault-finder and scandal-monger.

"No thank you," said Jeremiah, and let her pass on.

"Well," said the portreeve, "you have not cast your glove."

"N-n-o," answered Jeremiah sadly.

"Then," said the portreeve, "I withdraw from you the Grammar School. Leave the place at a month's notice."

Thus Jeremiah Toope was again adrift. But how could he choose one of those seven damsels offered to him, when all the while before his mind's eye he saw the pleading face of the fairy Noyalen, and her blue eyes intently fixed upon him?

Mr. Toope walked disconsolately back to the school-house, and began to pack up his books. What books he had there! What stores of stories! Not once had he been asked to tell any of these latter to his pupils in the school. But then, he had not sought to win their ears, so full was his mind of the pixies on the moor. Presently he lit on the gold crock.

He held it in his hand, and fell into deep thought. Still thinking, he left the house, holding it; lost in a dream he went away, up on to the moor, where the bees were humming, gathering honey from the sweet gorse flowers. Wrapped in thought, Jeremiah put his gold vessel under a branch of gorse and shook the plant. At once a number of dewdrops fell from it into the bowl. He sipped—he was still in a dream—and no sooner had he drunk than he vanished clean away, disappeared from the sight and knowledge of men, and has never been seen or heard of since.

It is thought that he has gone to the Pixy land, has married the Princess Noyalen, and has become a Pixy, and has ceased to be a Mortal.

NOTES

I. Princess Rosalind.

All the first part to the return of the princess is from "The Ballad of the Outlandish Knight." One evening on Dartmoor in a kitchen I heard a moorman, named Gregory, sing a version of this ballad that was new to me. The knight was not an outlandish man, but a "fiend-knight," and the verses were a variation on the stall-printed copies. Immediately after he had done, another man, named Setter, said that he knew the ballad, but it was not as Gregory sang it; and he chanted the well-known "Ballad of the Outlandish Knight." I have tacked on another story to the first part so as to complete the tale, which in its original form is fragmentary.

II. Jack Horner.

The old chapbook history of Jack Horner was printed in London in 1750, at Newcastle in 1770, and there were also Glasgow editions.

In the original there is no background out of which the several adventures spring. They are detached. I have supplied this by the introduction of "The Gold-Leaf Shadow."

III. Heming.

The "Deeds of Heming" is a short Icelandic saga, of which one MS. belongs to A.D. 1334, but the story is far older, and forms the basis of several Faroese and Norse ballads. It is certainly founded on some historic grounds, but the contest between Heming and King Harald Hardrede is copied from

that of Endrid and King Olaf Tryggvason. The saga is, moreover, incomplete. As it stands, there is no explanation why Aslak should have sent his son away north to the Finns; nor any motive given for King Harald's barbarity towards Heming; nor, indeed, for his determination to have him brought before him. Both these matters must have existed in the earliest form of the story. I have ventured to restore them. The incident of the apparition of Odin is taken from the saga of King Olaf Tryggvason and from that of King Olaf the Saint, the brother of Harald Hardrede. Another obvious gap in the Icelandic saga is this:—King Harald remarks that Heming's arrows are inlaid with gold; and there all ends. There is a hasty conclusion of the story telling how Heming dealt Harald his death-wound in the battle of Stamford Bridge, and this we know was through an arrow shot from the English host. Here again I have connected the two circumstances as they must have stood in the original story. In the Tell legend Tell retains an arrow, after having aimed at the apple, and when asked why he has done this, says that it was for Gessler in the event of his having killed his brother. This incident, which surely occurred in the Heming's saga in its original form, has also dropped out, and I have restored it. The "Heming's Thattr" was first published in 1855, at Reykjaveh, in a collection called *Sex Sögn Thaetter*, but this is scarce and difficult to procure. It was reprinted by Möbius in his *Analecta Norræna*, Leipzig, 1859. The account of the battle of Stamford Bridge is in the *Heimskringla* of Snorro, and also in the saga of Harald Sigardson (*Förn Manna Sögur* vi., caps. 118, 119).

An Aslak, a bonder, is mentioned in the sagas of King Harald, as also the visit of Odd the Icelander, and a quarrel with the king relative to trading with the Finns in the north without his leave; but Heming is not mentioned. Odd Ufeig's son is also mentioned in the "Grettis Saga" and the "Bandamanna Saga," and is altogether a historical personage. The latter saga relates a good deal about him.

The story has never been translated from the Icelandic.

IV. Cleomene.

This story Jeremiah must have composed himself.

V. The Ash-Maid.

The only existing copy of the English lay of Le Frain is in the Auchinleck MS., in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, but is, unfortunately, like every other poem in that valuable collection, incomplete. It can, however, be completed, as far as the story goes, from Marie of France's Lai le Freisne, of whose compositions only one MS. is known to exist, and that is in the British Museum. It was dedicated apparently to our Henry III., and was a Norman-French rendering of Welsh ballads.

The tale is a very general one; it is that which is given as the mythical origin of the Guelfs. The story is this: At the end of the eighth century Count Isenbard, of Altdorff, one of Charlemagne's generals, espoused Irmengard, the sister of the Empress Hildegard. Irmengard having one day heard that a woman had borne three children at a birth, persuaded her husband to order them to be drowned. Isenbard was sent on an expedition. Shortly after his departure his wife gave birth to twelve boys at once. Terrified at the judgment she had passed on herself, she persuaded an old nurse to drown eleven of the children. In the meantime, at the solicitation of Isenbard, the emperor allowed him to return. On his way home he met the old woman going to do her office, and asked her what burden she had upon her back. She answered they were young whelps which she was ordered to drown.

The count insisting on seeing them, the old woman confessed the whole affair, upon which he ordered her to conceal the discovery from his wife. The children were bred up at the house of a miller. When they were six years old the count introduced them at a feast. Their similarity to the twelfth, who had been bred at home, greatly astonished the guests. Isenbard then demanded, "What does the mother deserve who intended to murder her children?" Irmengard swooned at the feet of her husband, and prayed his forgiveness, which he granted her,

In commemoration of the adventure he denominated his sons The Young Whelps. Eleven of them died without heirs. The twelfth, who had been retained by his mother, is said to have been father to Judith, second queen to Louis I., successor to Charlemagne, to Conrad, ancestor of Hugh Capet, and to Rudolf, founder of the houses of Brunswick and Hohenzollern.

Similar tales are found elsewhere. The same story is found in Devonshire, and has been worked up by Mrs. Bray in her *Peep at the Pixies.* The English lay has been published by H. Weber in his *Metrical Romances of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries*, Edinburgh, 1810. The liberties I have taken with the story are very slight; the reason for them will be obvious to anyone who studies the original and considers who will be the readers of this book.

VI. Patient Helen.

The story of Patient Helen is taken from the old romance of *La Belle Helene.* The fair Helen was, no doubt, originally intended to be S. Helena, wife of Constantius Chlorus, and mother of Constantine. All kinds of fables circulated concerning her in the Middle Ages. She was said to have been daughter of Coel, King of the Trinobantes, the founder of Colchester, and to this day a mound at Lexden, forming a portion of the old British town, is called "King Cole's Kitchen." This king also is the famous King Cole "who was a merry old soul," whose memory is still fragrant in our nurseries. It was said that Helena found the true cross at Jerusalem by digging on the top of Calvary, and accordingly the town of Colchester bears on its arms the cross, with crowns to represent that inherited by S. Helena and those acquired by her union with Constantius. In the romance every trace of the religious aspect of the story has disappeared. In the late form in which the romance has come to us, Constantius has been converted into Henry. I have ventured to restore to him his proper name.

VII. Flower-de-Luce.

This story is based on the old black-letter ballad of "A Prince of *England's* Courtship to the King of *France's* Daughter," sung to the tune of "Crimson Velvet." It was reprinted in A. Phillips's *Collection of Old Ballads*, London, 1723, vol. i. The date of this ballad is in the reign of James I. It is probably a still earlier ballad rewritten. I have taken some liberties with the story. In the original, the prince is actually slain and the princess marries a mere forester, whom the king creates Earl of Flanders. The story is much improved by the healing of the prince and by making him become a forester. I have added a few other touches, which may be excused, as the story is told for children.

VIII. The Water of Light.

Cannot be traced; apparently a product of the brain of Jeremiah.

IX. Generides.

The metrical romance of Sir Generydes is of vast length. Even that copy published by the Early English Text Society which is without a portion that has been lost, consists of 6997 lines. The romance was first edited by Mr. Furnival for the Roxburgh Club in 1866. That from another MS. is edited by Mr. Aldis Wright, 1878. No traces so far have been found of it in old French. A printed edition appeared in 1569, but no copy is known to exist. I have had to condense the story so as to make it endurable to a modern reader.

X. Sir Cleges.

Sir Cleges is one of the few English fabliaux that exist. It is found in a MS. of the fourteenth century, and was printed by Weber in *Metrical Romances*, 1810, vol. i.

I have made a little alteration in it. Into the English story the royal hawk is not introduced; but in Sachetti's *Novelli*, written about 1376, occurs the same story, told of Philip of

Valois, and the hawk occurs in this. In Sachetti's story a peasant finds the hawk, and knowing that it is the property of the king, by the *fleurs-de-lys* engraved on the collar, goes with it to the palace. But in Sachetti's tale there is nothing about the cherries at Christmas. The English story is full of picturesqueness of detail.

XI. Heart of Ice.

A very free version of a tale, "Short Boots," in *A New Collection of Fairy Tales*, London, 1750. I have followed the outline of the story.

XII. Brains-in-his-Toes.

A free rendering of a widespread tale, found in various forms, in the Pantschatantra, Tutinamch, and in a Bohemian form in Wenzig, Westslawische Märchen, Leipzig, 1857. See for its many variations, Benfey, Pantschatantra, Leipzig, 1859, I. p. 510 *et seq.*

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